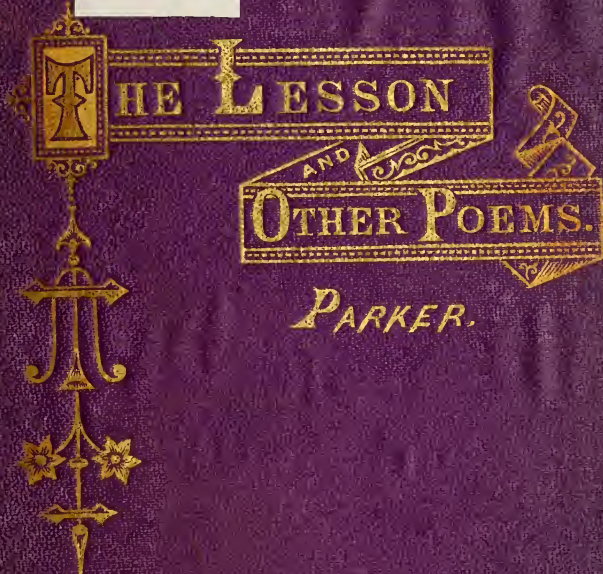




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THE LESSON

AND

OTHER POEMS.

PARKER.

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THE LESSON;

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

*Benjamin
S. Parker*
B. S. PARKER.



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DEDICATION.

TO MY FATHER AND MOTHER,

WHO, I TRUST,

AFTER YEARS OF SEPARATION,

ARE REUNITED IN THE BETTER LIFE,

AND WHOM, IN KINDLY THOUGHT, OR HALLOWED MEMORIES,

I CANNOT SEPARATE, NOR RECALL THE COMPASSIONATE

LOVE OF THE ONE, WITHOUT RENEWING THE

LONG SUFFERING, FAITH AND

HOPE OF THE OTHER;

THIS LITTLE BOOK

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED BY THEIR

SON AND DEBTOR,

B. S. P.

P R E F A C E .

DEAR READER, whoever you may be, I present you these humble verses, the echoes of the nobler emotions that have struggled for utterance in the midst of a life of toil and anxiety, without apology.

If anything in this little volume shall induce or strengthen good thoughts, kindly sympathies, and generous motives, among even that small circle of readers of whose disinterested friendship I am already assured I shall be content.

B. S. P.

November 1, 1871.



THE LESSON.

THE LESSON.

THE LESSON.

I.

A tiny rill and a little child,
In a fair and lovely land,
And the child has heaped in the water's edge,
A pile of the yellow sand,
Then tries to hold the current back
With a little dimpled hand.

But sunken like a rose leaf wet
With nectar sweet as dew,
The little hand beneath the tide,
Transparent meets the view,
And, with the mien of a thoughtful man
Who sees a wonder new,

He queries why "they will not stop—
These drops that laugh and sigh—
I cannot hold them in my grasp;
They still go rushing by;
They will not pause, they cannot rest,
Do the waters never die?

“They murmur, murmur, as they go;
I know not what they say:
But yet I think they sing to me
Of a region far away,
Of cities, and domes, and palaces,
A river and a bay.”

Sometimes I hear my robin's voice,
And then my sparrow's song;
And now the blue-jay's rolic call,
As the water skips along;
And now my drowned hand is numb,
And the current swift and strong.

I wonder if the waters think,
And know the things they say;
And why they ripple, and run, and rush,
And journey night and day;
And if they know I watch them here,
As they tinkle on their way.

They whisper, whisper the prettiest things,
I wish I knew their talk:
It's like the wind when the maple leaves
Come pattering on the walk;
It's like the rain when it strikes the pads
On my tiger-lily stalk.

It's like—I know not what it's like—
But it seems to speak to me
Of gliding keels, and sailing ships,
And things that are to be
When I am grown a man, and dwell
Beside the restless sea

And then it sings, "I grow, I grow;
I'm here but a little rill;
In the orchard I'm fully a yard across;
In the meadow wider still;
And the children float their little boats
On my breast at William's mill."

And I hear no more the robin's song,
Nor the sparrow's treble call;
But a mighty river's rush and roar,
Where shadows of mountains fall;
And surges of a wonderful sea,
Whose cliffs are white and tall.

I cannot think of lesson or play,
But dream what I shall know
When, like the rill, I move along,
And better and larger grow;
And when I think of this happy day
It will seem so long ago.

And if I come in my noble strength
Again to this sunny rill,
I'll try to remember this little boy,
Who is sitting here so still,
And think 'twas me, and is me yet,
In purpose, and soul, and will.

II.

A little rill and a wrinkled man,
In a fair and lovely land,
And he has heaped in the water's edge
A pile of yellow sand;

Then tries to dam the tiny beck,
With a weak and trembling hand.

'T was twenty summers ago, he sighs,
In childish treble, I know
I came back here from my eastern voyage,
Yes, twenty summers ago,
In all the strength of fifty years,
I stood by this rivulet's flow.

And then I thought of a little child,
Who, forty years before,
Beheld a vision of wealth and strength,
And wisdom, and love and more—
Aye, more than I had ever borne
From the great world's mighty store.

It seemed to me but yesterday—
It seems just so this noon—
That, full of childish hope, I heard
This brooklet's lightsome rune,
And, from the slender music, learned
Life's most exultant tune.

But I was only fifty then;
My thoughts were hot and wild
With finance, politics, and trade,
For love was long exiled
From active thought to silent life,
I soon forgot the child.

But all the toil is over now;
My visions long withdrawn;
And so I sit beside the rill,

And think upon the gone,
And feel myself a little child,
That, in the happy dawn,

Has wakened to the robin's song,
And to the sparrow's call,
And sought the brooklet's yielding verge,
To hear the measures fall
The tinkling, whispering waters make
Above the pebbles small.

A child again! this beck is like
The stream of time, I cry.
Time, like the waters, will not rest,
But still goes rushing by;
The moments flow like floating drops
Till time himself shall die.

The young grow old, the old grow weak:
Time's river flows along;
A tiny rill, a rushing stream,
It nears the mighty throng
Of waves eternal, beating high
The future's endless song.

And so beside the rill I sit
And feel the wonder still,
Through all the years I am the same,
In purpose and in will,
And dream another happy dream
The future may fulfill.

No more to passion love belongs,
Nor hope to golden gains.

The under-current of my years
Fills all my life as rains,
In winter, fill the dwindled brooks,
And wake their old refrains.

The chords of love's immortal lyre
Are trembling on the keys,
And only wait a shadow hand
To rouse their melodies—
A hand that waits me where the stream
Shall meet th' eternal seas.

I dream of domes and palaces
Not reared by mortal hands;
Of cities by the summer's sea,
And far, unnumbered lands
That roll their wealth, in music, down
A million shining strands.

I greet the friends of other days,
Where endless joys distill
As freely as the dews that fall
Along this laughing rill,
And there, 't is me, O! child! me yet,
In purpose, soul, and will.

III.

A new grave in the church-yard now;
The rill flows on and on;
Young hearts are beating on its verge;
Love waketh with the dawn;
And never a robin nor sparrow sings
A note about the gone.

Lives flow, like waters to the sea,
With freights of good or ill;
And ever and ever the dear Lord holds
The strings of their being still.
And leads them down their devious ways
His purpose to fulfill.

One cries, "O, sinner!" and one, "O, saint!"
And the river's banks recede;
One grasps at the pebbles on the marge,
In the depth of his golden greed;
One chases a bubble, and one but floats,
As the rushing waves proceed.

But deep in the lives that rush, and toss,
And jostle and swirl, and flow,
Are childhood's visions, hopes, and prayers,
And the loves of long ago,
To shrive the soul in its agony,
And to bless extremest woe.

And often the pallet of rags and straw,
And the raters, brown and bare,
Are seen by age through the blissful lens
Of youth, long fresh, and fair,
Till they are sweet, like the summer skies;
And soft, like the summer air.

The prison wall and the scaffold plank
In memory cease to be;
But, children again, the convicts stand
On the brink of the "death-cold sea;"
"For except as little children ye come,
Ye cannot come to me."

Be rich, or poor, or high, or low;
Whenever the race is run,
God only knows His erring child
As a father his erring son;
And so it is very sweet to say,
"Dear Lord! Thy will be done."

WANDERING.

I.

Winter rules the world without;
Gusts of snow-flakes whirl about,
And the breeze is sharp and cold,
As it sweeps the barren wold.
Summer songsters, summer flowers,
Sing not, bloom not in the bowers;
Yet I'm dreaming all day long
Of a land of bloom and song—
Some fair island in the sea,
Clothed with green eternally—
Where the birds of paradise
Build amid the bowers of spice;
And from thousand tiny throats
One harmonious ditty floats,
Through the seasons fair and long,
Sweetest tide of choral song.

II.

There, through all the changing time,
Fruits are in their luscious prime,

And the seas of bloom outpour
Finest odors, and the shore
Lies beneath a reef of shells,
In whose corrugated cells,
Every fair and lovely dye
That paints the earth or tints the sky
Hides through all the ardent days
From the sun's intrusive gaze.

III.

Oft in fancy I retreat
To this paradisaal seat,^{*}
And with one who, long ago,
Learned the song I cannot know,
Saw the glories that to me
Are a shadowed mystery—
Through that thought-created land
Wander onward hand in hand.

IV.

So we see through evening mist,
Domes and towers of amethYST,
Woods and mountains manifold;
Spacious temples wrought of gold;
Paradisaal lands of rest
That no mortal foot has press'd;
New Jerusalems that stand
Glorious in that wonder-land.

V.

Fades the day and fades the mist;
Sink the towers of amethYST;

And we learn what fruitful rays
Built up those walls of praise.
When the sunlight quits the sky,
All the glorious visions die;
Yet, through ether clear and far,
Shines the mellow evening star.
So, when youth's warm tide is spent,
Fade the lustres that it lent
To the present and the gone,
And the future's happy dawn;
Yet the steadfast star of love
Shines forever up above.

VI.

Memory sketches, fancy paints,
Regions worthy of the saints;
Bears us thither, and we meet,
Gliding on with noiseless feet,
Some enchanted friend who took
Life as but a summer book;
Read it on a pleasant day;
Bowed her head and passed away;
And our wandering fancies range
'Round this mystery of change,
What is death? we ask, and what
Is there real? What is not?
What is life, and what its end?
Whither do our journeyings tend?
Faded; absent; gone for aye;
Yet forever 'round our way
Are the dead. We see them still,
Be our days of joy or ill,
Shall we meet them, face to face,

In some more ethereal place;
Tread with them the pleasant shore,
Whither they have gone before;
Wander with them, hand in hand,
Through some flowery Eden land?
Shall we know the friends we love
In the better world above?
Ah! no answer! well, we wait
Hitherside the golden gate,
And in fancy oft retreat
To some paradisaal seat,
Following some enchanted face,
Lovely with its morning grace.
Though the tides of youth be dead,
Still the light of love is shed
O'er us, till we fade and fall;
After that we shall know all,
Or know nothing—who shall tell?
Yet God *doeth all things* well.
Deathless soul, or mouldering clay,
God has made a perfect way.
We shall reach the end designed
By the All-pervading Mind.

VII.

Call it error, if you will;
Yet I trust Jehovah's skill
Is not balked by any plan,
Laid by demon or by man,
And the ends He made us to
Ever present in His view,
Shall be filled at last by all;
Not a sparrow, even, shall fall,

MY ROBIN.

Unaccounted or unknown;
 Not a seed that He has sown
 Perish in the silent ground,
 Till its uses shall be found.

VIII.

O! we can but trust and wait,
 Till death swingeth wide the gate,
 Then we dream that we shall be
 Given to life eternally,
 And our spirits shall retreat
 To some paradisa! seat,
 Or shall wander, free and far,
 Through the realms of sun and star.
 But, however this shall be,
 Faith this promise bears to me,
 God will give me toil or rest,
 Peace or turmoil to my breast,
 Bliss or anguish, good or ill,
 As shall best my needs fulfill.

MY ROBIN.

Out in the cheery breath of morn,
 Up from the meadow winging,
 Before the day is fairly born,
 I hear my robin singing.

Last year before the maples' crown,
 Received its purple glory,

This jolly fellow set the town
A ringing with his story.

And now, before the snow is gone,
His merry pipings greet us,
The soul of Spring's impending dawn,
In music come to meet us.

O! robin in the cherry tree,
With heart so brave, yet tender,
Why singest thou so merrily,
In the morning's ruddy splendor?

Thou wakest thoughts of other years,
When being's sunny fountain
Seemed flowing onward through the spheres,
From some celestial mountain.

Old strains of music, wild and sweet,
Are in thy notes returning,
Old greetings, such as children meet,
Set all my spirit yearning.

And dreaming of the pleasant wood,
Where maple boughs were swinging,
And, children of the neighborhood,
We mocked the robin's singing.

The curly heads are by my side,
I hear the children's laughter,
And see the dreams that hope denied,
But cherished ever after.

And now, as in the swooning waves,
Of half-unconscious sadness,

THE FIRESIDE.

I hear above the little graves,
The robin's song of gladness.

The little feet have silent grown,
Or seek the wood no longer,
But memory still retains her own
And love than death is stronger.

And childish ways and childish plays,
And children's voices ringing,
Float upward from departed days
Whene'er my robin's singing,

THE FIRESIDE.

Die away, O! evening wonder,
From your glory in the west,
For the silent hours are coming
When the laborer shall rest.

Pleasant are the smiles of morning,
Gorgeous is the flaming noon,
But the better fruit of being,
Ripens underneath the moon.

Round the merry fires of evening,
When the lamps are blazing bright,
Shine for us the kindly faces
Glorifying all the night.

Then the voice of song and laughter,
Echoes through the cheerful room,

And the glow within is warmer,
Deepening with the outer gloom.

We grow tender with the poets,
With the sages we are wise,
With Divinity we gamble
For the everlasting prize.

All the climes the traveler visits,
Add their treasures to our store,
Greek and Roman stand before us,
Peerless in their ancient lore.

All the sinewy thongs of iron,
All the quivering nerves of wire,
Binding sea and sea together,
Bless us round our evening fire.

Lo! the lightning from the heavens,
Flashing earthward in its play,
Bears the hourly thought of nation
Unto nation far away.

On its inky panorama,
Now the evening press repeats
What the morning voice of Europe
Uttered on a myriad streets.

And we feel the heart of peoples,
Wakened into newer life,
From the old historic ages,
Beating on to nobler strife.

Upward still, in mighty cycles,
Slowly moves the multitude,

To the final culmination,
Each man's right is all men's good.

Round our evening lamp we gather,
From the world's concentered thought,
What the pens of seers have written,
What the thinkers' toils have wrought,

What the dubious lights of history,
Cast upon the sickening show
Of misrule, and war and vengeance,
Filling up "the earth's long woe."

Only as we deal with others,
Shall the ministers of fate
Deal with us, as men or nations,
By our meeds of love or hate.

But again the thoughts are centered,
In the circle gathered round,
Let the great world rave and struggle
Leave the depths of thought profound.

Here are gentle hearts that love us,
Love us round our evening fire,
Here are careful hands to guide us
Where our wayward thoughts aspire.

Let the passing hour be yielded
Unto friendship's sweet domain,
Let the social thought be cherished
Polished memories golden chain.

Hasten not, O! fleeting moments,
When our souls are thus in tune,

To the finest notes of being
Thrilling 'neath the silent moon.

O! through all our days of labor,
Strifes, and toilings, we aspire
To be happy in the evening,
With the circle round the fire.

CLARIBELL.

Claribell!

Through the morning calm and sweet
Comes the tramp of little feet,
Pattering at the open door,
Tinkering on the naked floor,
Where the merry sunbeams fell
Long ago, dear Claribell.

Claribell!

Now the robin and the jay
Chatter where the branches sway,
O'er the pathway, down the walk,
Hallowed by thy pleasant talk;
By thy talk and by thy song,
When the summer days were long,
And the tangled ivies meet,
Meet and blossom where thy feet
In our pleasant journeys fell,
Little darling Claribell.

Claribell!

Not the glory of the morn,

Glimmering through the miles of corn;
Not the polyphonian notes,
Fluting from the feathered throats;
Not a thousand happy hours
Nursed by summer in her flowers;
Nor the terraces of light
Fading from the path of night;
Sweet emotions, soft desires,
Love with all her blissful fires,
Shall renew thee, as of old,
For thy little feet are mold,
And the summer breezes swell
O'er thy slumber, Claribell.

Claribell!

We have wandered far and long
Since we heard thy morning song;
We have tarried long and late,
Watching where the sunbeams wait,
For thy shadow that no more
Glides along the cottage floor;
What are half a score of years,
Months of agony and tears,
Days of darkness and distress,
Fleeting hours of happiness?
Through them all we raise the cry,
"Come from out the fields of sky,
From the silent realms of space,
Dimpled chin and sunny face,
Eyes with laughter brimming o'er,
Shine upon us here once more;
Here once more our pleasures swell,
Dearest angel, Claribell!"

Claribell!

Never more thy form we see,
Clothed with our mortality,
Yet we know thee very well,
Like some happy miracle,
Wrought by unseen hands to bless
Even paths of wretchedness;
Yet thy presence pure and sweet,
Gliding on with noiseless feet,
Hovering viewless in the air,
Meets and greets us everywhere;—
Not beyond some golden door,
Hidden from us evermore,
Not upon some far off strand,
Beckoning with a shadow hand,
Like the wise and great who die,
Ghostly templars of the sky,
Trumpeting from awful heights,
Warning through the solemn nights;—
But about us pure and calm,
Constant blessing, constant psalm,
Growing with the growing years,
Heightening joy and sweetening tears;
So we love our darling well
Lost, but present Claribell!

THE DARKENED ROOM.

Out of the deepest sorrow,
Out of the darkest night,
Into the peaceful morrow,
Comes the purest light.

THE SINGERS.

Out from the troubled spirit,
That toils and battles long,
Into the silence after,
Flows the sweetest song.

God, who cares for the sparrows,
Watches you and me;
Somewhere in the endless ages,
Our heritage shall be.

Faithful in every anguish,
Trusting through the gloom,
We shall be led, hereafter,
Out of the darkened room.

What if the dawn be hidden,
Under the lids of night,
Till the eternal morning,
Bringeth supernal light;

Who shall mock our patience,
Or call our faith in vain?
God, who has given us sorrow,
Will give us joy again.

THE SINGERS.

O! the beauty of the morning,
And the splendor of the day,
In the purple mists of evening,
Melting, mingling, die away.

Softly then athwart the silence,
Comes the music of the gone,
Thrilling through the merry measures,
Of our being's happy dawn.

Sing, O! warblers of the morning,
Many an old remembered tune,
That your throats refused to utter
In the fiery tide of noon.

In the turmoil and the racing,
And the chasing after gold,
Men forget the kindly welcomes
Of the pleasant songs of old.

From the pathway to the altar,
Where the mammon lovers throng,
Fly away the merry singers,
Rolls away the tide of song.

Never comes a choral echo,
To the ears of him whose feet
Trample down the flowers of morning,
Scatter all things, fair and sweet.

Song and youth go on together,
And the singers reckon well,
In what spirits still the sunshine,
And the youthful sweetness dwell.

When the shadows of the even
Bid the fevered pulses rest,
And the golden gates of Heaven
Seem to open in the west.

Unto these return the singers,
Merry singers of the morn,
Chanting yet about the future,
Of a future still unborn.

For the measures of the morning
And the evening are the same,
Only calling—ever calling,
Upward where the glories flame.

Through the vistas, o'er the mountains,
Where Aurora leads the day,
Through the vapor land of wonder,
Where the evening fades away,

Still they fly beyond our seeing,
Yet we hear them in the blue,
Singing in the far expanses,
“God is love, and love is true.”

Never hand of scald nor harper
Bade such choral numbers rise;
Never seer nor saintly elder
Drew such wisdom from the skies.

Sweetly in the hour of sorrow,
Defly through the darkest gloom,
Soundeth far the peerless voices,
Singing of the morning's bloom.

Singing till the blossoms gather,
Even on the cruel grave,
Till we smile and go contented—
Go contented through the wave,

Through the bitter wave that lieth
Bordering on the earthly strand,
Till we seek the happy silence
Of a strangely silent land.

THE TOILER'S DREAM.

The toiler slept a long, uneasy sleep,
And in the midst thereof, a vision rose—
A dream about a dream that filled his brain.
He thought he woke, and on his wife and boys
Gazed with a tender yearning at his heart,
But called them not; then through the uncurtained pane
Saw Venus glowing with a tremulous light
Upon the very margin of the dawn;
Then rose, and putting on his raiment, passed,
Beneath his humble door-tree, sped across
Great plains of red-top, shining in the dew
Like roses steeped in nectar, fields of wheat,
Whose slender lances in the crispy air
Tossed like the streamers which we see on ships
Sailing in favoring breezes from their ports;
Beneath the elm-trees, where the robins sang
Their joyous praises to the advancing sun;
Across the orchards, where the cat-bird's mirth,
In garrulous quavers, shook the infant fruit;
And over rocky hill and flowery dale;
And on, and on, and still the wonder grew—
A sea of glory in the shining East—
Till all his soul, enamored of the scene,

Shouted in unison with brooks and birds;
And fancy mounted in the glimmering haze,
And eastward flew, till many thousand suns
Gave each his light to systems vast as ours;
And every planet showed a million dawns;
And every dawn was breaking in the East;
And every dawn beheld a happy race—
A race of men where justice held aloft
Her polished scales, that wavered with a breath,
And none were found to cheat the balance; none
To wring the sweat of blood from weary brows,
And none were beggars, none were lords; but all
Bore burdens for each other; and the wealth
They made, outmeasuring individual needs,
Wrought works of art and towers for learning's use,
And builded airy halls in pleasant parks
Wherein the people at their leisure came
To read the masters of philosophy,
To search the lettered scrolls of history through,
Or mark the unlettered legends of the rocks,
With all their marvelous stories of the past,
That antedating continents and man
Recall the life of the primordial seas;
Turn amateurs in science and produce
The wonders of the retort; analyze
All forms of use or beauty into gas
As thin as rhymes for formal holidays;
Turn the great telescopes to heaven and count
The worlds on worlds and weigh them one by one;
Look through the microscopes and there behold
The infusorial wonders of the air
And earth and water, and all things therein;
And chasing science thus to suit the will,
Each following that which yielded most delight,

The range of knowledge grew from more to more.
Some viewed the wonders on the chiseled stone,
Wrought by the Angelos of every town;
Or on the canvas saw the raptures grown
Beneath the touch of Raphaels numbered not,
Except by needs of the communities
Of cultured souls that filled the teeming world;
Or on a million pages traced the flow
Of poesy, that seraph language, used
To render thoughts, that in sublimest heights
Dwell nearest God's unmeasured excellence.
Or, when of learning weary, they would chase
The flying ball across the park, or swim
In the luxurious mazes of the dance,
Or, in gymnasiums well appointed, train
Each nerve and muscle to the highest use,
Pitch the huge quoit, or toil upon the bars,
Or ply the oars upon the river's breast,
Or linger where the heavenly strains out-pour
From instruments of perfect form and tone;
Or wander singing through the pleasant woods
Where myriad feathered warblers congregate.
And when returning from a day of rest
To quiet homes that nestled in the groves,
They met the household with a love that made
The very roof-trees blossom into joys,
And all the world a paradise of peace.
How happily their thanks went forth to God;
How sweet they rested, and with morning rose
To toil, and know that best results were sure
From every stroke of hammer on the steel,
Or furrow cut across the pleasant fields,
Or rush of throbbing engines, spread of sails
That catch the breezes on a thousand seas;

The whir of spindles and the clank of looms,
The nervous strokes of telegraphs that bear
The thought of continent to continent,
The labors of the builders, and of all
Who build up cities, make the country smile,
Train nature up to uses best for man.

The sun awoke him, shining through the panes
On the bare walls and meagre couch of straw;
And so, the vision past, his toil began
Upon a stately pile of stone that grew
On labor poorly paid, from bounty wrung
From other toilers by the sharper's art.
A mansion fit for princes of the mind,
Kings in the empire of triumphant souls;
But yet, a tribute raised by trembling hands
To lying impudence and brazen cheek,
And vulgar meanness that but shuns the law's
Dire penalties, and keeps within the range
Of human decencies, by that small breadth
That people always recognize between
A rogue convicted and a rogue at large.

So ran the dream, and so it faded out;
Yet all the world is beautiful and fair,
And all the souls are nearest God, that dream
Of happy futures when the earth shall move,
And all the universe of man revolve
Insphered in sunless orbits of delight,
And every man shall yield his brother man
The good he claims himself; and right shall be
The Lord and Master over all that live.

RHYME OF THE WITHERED LEAVES.

I.

Gold and scarlet, dry and brown,
 Ripened leaves are quivering down;
 See! the ground is covered o'er
 With a many-colored store;
 All the paths along the wood,
 All the forest solitude,
 Every dear, sequestered nook,
 Where I read my summer book,
 Where the vernal violet,
 In its modest fringe was set,
 And the robin sang of love,
 From the greening boughs above,
 Are with fallen glories spread;
 Crowns from many a kingly head,
 Wreaths from many a noble brow
 Lie amid these ruins now.

II.

Every gust that hurries by,
 Whirls the withered leaves on high,
 And they sweep along the ground,
 With a mournful, rustling sound,
 Till the hillsides interpose,
 Where they heap in deep long rows.

III.

O! it is a pleasure sweet,
 Where our hills and valleys meet

To recline amid the leaves,
On these Indian Summer eves,
Watching all the gates of day,
Closing on the lurid way
Of the Sun, who wraps a shroud,
Made of gold and amber cloud,
Round his God-like form, and goes
Proudly to his night's repose.

IV.

All the springs of being move
To the finest notes of love,
Blending with the sorrowing air
Like echoes from a distant prayer,
So soft, unsyllabled, and low,
We weep, yet feel no cause for woe.

V.

All tenderer feelings grow intense
And banish all of groveling sense;
The past re-wrought appears again,
And with the spirit's piercing ken
We see from out these mortal shells,
The brimming tide of soul that swells,
Expanding, till its flow must be
As boundless as infinity:
Our future seems to reach and blend
With being that shall never end:
The loved, the lost, the mourned and true,
Each form, each face, the same we knew
Them long ago, and each delight
And hope that set in rayless night,

All sweet impressions, gentle words,
E'en shout of brooks and song of birds
Return to sadden or to cheer,
To wake the smile, evoke the tear,
Then pass, to blend with that broad sea
Of life, that flows eternally.

A QUESTION.

Through the changing necromancy
Of a life's protracted dream,
Oft we question in the darkness,
"Are things brighter than they seem?"

Happy voices, angel voices,
Thrilling through the deepest gloom,
Singing that the rose of morning
Trembles to the perfect bloom;

Singing of the fields of Eden,
And the lands beyond the stream,
Tell us, in the dreary watches,
"Are things brighter than they seem?"

Does the cloud that bears the sorrow
Bear the bow upon its breast;
Are the days of storm and battle
Just preparing days for rest?

Is the peace the father giveth
Only waking from a dream,

As a child wakes in the morning,
"Are things brighter than they seem?"

MORNING CLOUDS.

Clouds of the morning,
Golden and gay,
Float from the portals
Of sunrise away.

Clouds of the morning,
In splendor unrolled,
You usher Aurora,
In curtains of gold.

Clouds of the morning,
Your beauties suggest
The home of the angels,
The isles of the blest.

As Mirza, in vision,
Beheld their array,
So I see them afloat,
Round the portals of day;

And my vision entranced
On your glory reclines,
Till it fades from the sun,
In your long wav'ring lines;

Till your long wavering lines
 Soften down in the day,
And you float from the presence
 Of sunrise away.

MORNING.

I had a dream of other days;
 In golden luxury shone the wheat,
In tangled greenness shook the maize;
 The squirrels ran with nimble feet,
And in and out among the trees,
 The hang-bird darted like a flame;
The cat-bird piped her melodies,
 Purloining every warbler's fame;
And then I heard triumphal song,
 "'Tis morning, and the days are long."

They scattered roses, strewed the palms,
 And shouted down the pleasant vales;
I heard a thousand happy psalms,
 And laughing, wove a thousand tales
Of mimic revelry and joy;
 They mocking well the worldly great—
Each tan-faced girl and bare-foot boy,
 Dear shapers of my early fate—
And then again the Æolian song,
 "'Tis morning, and the days are long."

Far-winding past the storied town,
 The river ran through bosky groves,

Its floods we sailed our vessels down,
Full freighted with a myriad loves;

Our souls went floating to the gales,
With every tiny shred of bark,
We christened cutters, schooners, sails,
Till lost within the shadowy dark;
Then down the waters flowed the song,
" 'Tis morning, and the day is long."

O! morning, when the days are long,
And youth and innocence are wed,
And every grove is full of song,
And every pathway void of dread;
Who rightly sings its rightful praise,
Or rightly dreams it o'er again,
When cold and narrow are the days,
And shrunken all the hopes of men,
He shall awaken with his song,
"The morning when the days were long."

There palpitations wild and sweet,
The thrills of many an old delight,
And dimpled hands that lightly meet,
And hearts that tremble to unite,
Arise upon the rosy morn,
Pass down the lovely vales and stand,
A picture of a memory born,
The mirage of a lotus land—
A land where once we trolled the song,
" 'Tis morning, and the days are long."

M. J. W.

DIED AT DAWN, FEB. 25, 1865.

And is she dead, the ever hopeful one,
The loving life that seemed but just begun,
So quickly past, and all its guerdons won?

And have we watched her feet, as day by day,
From childhood's sinless hours of sport and play,
To womanhood's more elevated way,

She trode with firm and ever new delight,
Along the paths of knowledge, gaining might
To wield in future battles for the right;

Alone to see them tremble, pause and fail
On the glad hills, and turn to walk the vale
Where night and gloom, decay and grief prevail?

The hopes we cherished for her future years
Are gone forever, through our dimming tears
All but the last and brightest disappears.

The last and brightest! in our doubt and gloom,
It throws to heaven the beauty of its bloom,
And drowns the death-smell under its perfume.

That blessed hope that teaches, in our pain,
That never noble life was lived in vain,
And even death dispenses greatest gain.

Her feet no more enlogged by earthly clay,
Mount upward now, in their celestial way,
Swift as the young lark soars to meet the day.

Upward forever on those hills of light,
Where love's effulgence banishes the night,
And every step reveals some new delight;

Where knowledge cometh not through toil or pain,
But sweetly falleth like the summer rain,
And fills the spirit with a boundless gain.

Again expanding through the eternal years,
While to its never-ending flow inheres
The multitudinous wonders of the spheres.

There faith establishes her paths, and there
Love looketh with her eye of gentle care,
And breathes through Christ, the merciful, a prayer;

When life shall pause and drop the numbering glass,
And death pronounce the midnight's solemn mass,
Bidding our good or evil forward pass,

To enter, with no selfish fear nor dread,
The silent army of the happy dead,
And follow where her morning walk has led.

HAROLD'S LAMENT.

O! the snow is sifting white,
Over plain and mountain height,
Like soft silver flakes of light.

And the winds are moaning by,
Oft with sad and solemn sigh;
Then with deepest anguish cry.

And, by memory's hallowed light,
See I one whose brow of white
Was like silver flakes of light;

And my heart does moan and cry,
And, with many an anguish sigh,
Count the moments long gone by

Twenty years ago to-day.
They did hide my love away,
Under heaps of frozen clay.

Twenty weary years ago
They did hide my loved one low;
When shall I unto her go?

I was fifty on the day,
That my angel pass'd away;
Now I 'm seventy, worn, and gray.

Younger only by a year,
Long in love's sweet atmosphere
She had dwelt beside me here.

Old folks cannot feel, they say,
Love as on the bridal day,
And grief holds but little sway.

May be this is true of some—
Husbands who are grave and grum,
And of love have scarce a crumb.

But for me, my dear old wife
Loved me truly through her life;
Through all days of toil or strife.

And I think that God would know
And would hate me, should I go
From the soul that loved me so.

Oft, in wondrous dreams, I take
Some dear burden for her sake,
With a will that cannot break

Bear it through the blazing noon,
For the evening cometh soon,
With th' inspiring stars and moon.

And they bring, at edge of night,
Her, whose faultless brow of white
Was like silvery flakes of light.

And at twilight calm and sweet,
When the light and darkness meet,
Then we walk with nimble feet,

Through the old house, room by room,
And through many a casement's gloom,
Catch the roses' sweet perfume,

As we glide along and peep
Where the play-worn children sleep,—
At one empty cot we weep.—

Then we pass the open door,
Wander to the river shore,
Hear the fisher's distant oar;

Listen to the night-hawk's call,
And the moaning waterfall,
Watch the great sky over all.

And I feel her hand in mine,
Feel a pulse of love divine,
Thrilling near this heart of mine.

And I sigh, O! heart, be bold,
Tell her all your love of old,
Tell her truths you never told.

With the sigh the dream goes by,
And with bitter anguish, cry,
Count I moments, long gone by.

Twenty weary years ago
They did hide my loved one low;
When unto her shall I go?

IXION.

He cannot break the Ophidian thongs,
His direst struggles are in vain;
Swift flies the wheel,—the hissing throngs
Of writhing horrors mock his pain.

Grim Pluto views, with mad delight,
His boundless terror, hopeless grief;
What, though the opposing gods unite,
This is his victim, past relief.

'Round his wild orbit let him rage;
Sweep round him, foul, tartaran breath;
Let these exquisite tortures wage
Continual death, but bring no death!

Fly from thyself, Ixion, fly!
Fly from thy hell unto thy hell!
Thy serpents bind thee, vain thy cry,
Thy fiends about thy orbit yell!

But hark! a strange seraphic note
Has fallen upon Ixion's ear,
Like the wild thrill that seems to float
Through love's enchanted atmosphere.

The serpent sinks his hooded head,
The flying wheel has found a rest,
To lower depths the fiends have fled,
The air wafts odors from the blest

'Tis but a moment, yet his soul
Laves in the ocean of delight;
Heaven reigns; Apollo has control;
Day glances through the caves of night.

O! faithful type of our humanity,
Bound to the flying wheel of time,
By sensuous cordons of insanity,
And serpent knots of unforgiven crime.

'Tis only echoes from the higher life,
The seraph music of the better spheres
Can still the raging hell of sin and strife,
And glorify the orbit of our years.

God's voices, ever musical and sweet,
They round themselves in rhythmic altitudes;
In every strain a poem is complete
And blessings flow through all their interludes.

Let thy waked spirit, like the morning flowers,
That meet the benisons of light and dew,
But ope its petals to the heavenly powers,
And let the music thrill it through and through.

If orphic warblers intimate the songs,
Or if from natures book the lay is trilled,
Or, if unheard, unseen, unread, it throngs
The soul, till its avenues are filled

With the delights of heaven, the joy is thine;
Thou reckonest how the seraph notes that dwell,
Within the depths of intellect divine,
Can ostracise the powers of death and hell.

A P R A Y E R.

Behold! we know not anything:
I can but trust that good shall fall,
At last—far off—at last to all
And every winter turn to spring.

Tennyson.

Bending downward from thy throne,
Father, hear thy children cry!

See the heart-break, list the moan,
Change our hearts of clay or stone;
Take us, make us all thine own;
Father, hear thy children cry.

Thou, who canst no anger know;
God of mercy, God of love,
Let thy blessings outward flow!
Let thy children from their woe
Leap with gladness, let them know
Thou art mercy, thou art love.

In the cities' gloom and glare
Walk the votaries of sin;
In the hamlets young and fair,
In the country's pleasant air,
Spite of fasting, spite of prayer,
Walk the votaries of sin.

Oh! the tinsel and the shame!
Father, see their nakedness!
Hear their tongues that breathe thy name,
Only with some horrid aim,
Born of alcoholic flame;
Father, see their nakedness.

Let persuasive voices ring
Sweet as that from Calvary,
Till these lost ones rise and bring
Offerings unto thee, and sing,
"Glory to our God and King,
And the Christ of Calvary."

High and higher up the height,
Up the bright supernal way,
Lead the souls that seek the light,
Let them lean on thee for might,
Day by day and night by night,
Up the bright supernal way.

In the silence soft and sweet,
Father, let thy presence be;
Where the night winds moan and beat
'Round the hovel, where the street
Bears its myriad erring feet;
Father, let thy presence be.

'Turn us from our wickedness,
Unto peace and love and joy;
Let us learn to praise and bless
Him who gives us happiness;
Lift us from our wretchedness
Unto peace and love and joy.

Be our talents great or small,
Let us in thy kingdom dwell;
Lift us up from every fall;
'Take the wormwood and the gall
From our lips, and be our all;
Let us in thy kingdom dwell.

LIFE AND EFFORT.

And is the grief that haunts with endless moan,
 A slow, consuming fire that will not die,
 But lifts its smoke and ashes to the sky,
 Till all the spirits' fountains simmer dry,
 Till love, and faith and heavenly hope have flown?

Not so, not so, each happy morn doth give
 Some new incentive to the earnest soul,
 To wrestle onward in the billowy roll
 Of waves that thunder to a far-off goal,
 Where cries a voice forever, "come and live!"

The dying grapple with the illusive waves
 That seem to bear them to the happy shore,
 They faint and sink and grapple never more,
 But still the mirage rises just before,
 And ever flitting, cheats us to our graves.

Is human effort thus in vain? is all
 The struggles of our lives, our lofty deeds,
 Our glorious conquests, our inflated creeds,
 The grappling, striving of our boundless greeds,
 More powerless than the dew of evening's fall?

"In vain, in vain!" the preachers moan and cry;
 Philosophy—that centers all in God,
 From realms of worlds, to worms upon the sod,
 That counts the life that thrills the unsightly clod,
 An emanation from the life on high,—

Divine philosophy with healing wing,
 That broods above us, soothes away our woe,

And charms and thrills our lives' serenest flow,
Respondeth thus, "no labors end we know
We judge not well of an unfinished thing."

In the eternal present, which we bound
To suit desire and appetite, and mark
With the same pen that tallies up the cark
And care of living, from the light to dark,
And dark to light in ever varying round.

In this eternal present God will bring
To highest uses every noble thought,
And every work by love's dear fingers wrought;
We can but trust and wait; our fears are nought,
Life's work is ever an unfinished thing.

AUGUST.

The tide of being moveth now,
Like some broad river's onward flow,
With earnest murmur deep and low.

The woods are silent, save by spells
Some strain of insect music swells,
Or some lone bird her sorrow tells.

Too earnest for the laugh and shout,
That heralded the young spring out
From the long winter's gloom and doubt,

Life standeth on her middle way,
Between the birth of flowery May
And Winter's frost and sere decay,

And seems to listen, pleased and long,
To the low burden of a song
Unheard by any mortal throng.

The leaves turn upward to the light,
And like dim spectres robed in white,
The lazy clouds float out of sight.

Where late the hills were crowned with wheat,
The stubble glimmers in the heat,
And where the woods and meadows meet,

The herds enjoy the shadow deep,
And in his hollow house asleep,
The squirrel doth the long hours keep.

The humming-bird that glances bright,
A winged embodiment of light,
From flower to flower, flight after flight;

Seems an intruder on the low,
Deep song and murmur that doth go
Along with life's intensest flow.

O, life intense! O, ardent time!
Like flow of some great poet's rhyme,
Resistless pours this luscious chime.

It calms my brain, it soothes my soul,
Till o'er me, past all ill's control,
Sweet waves of calm enjoyment roll.

A SONG OF JUNE.

I.

Come, listen, dear Lilly, this morn,
What sounds are afloat on the air
And over the villages borne,
Are sweet, like the blessings of prayer;
What twitter, and warble and shout,
What silvery runlets of tune
Are echoing the woodlands about,
And pulsing away in the June;
The June that is speeding along,
With summery blessings replete,
While all of the ripples of song,
And harmonies simple and sweet,
Commingle in billowy swells,
And wildly sweep into our souls
As ocean sweeps into the shells
That lie on the sea-beaten shoals.

II.

Now over the meadow and hill,
And over the valleys afar,
The holiest blessings distil,
Like silvery rays from a star;
The oriole swingeth her nest,
High up on the wind wavered spray,
The red bird is out in his best,
The swallow is chasing the day
Around the blue rim of the sky;
The brown robin sings to his mate;

The blue bird flits cheerily by;
Like a globule of sunshine, elate
With life of intensest desires,
The humming bird flashes along;
And O! how the spirit aspires,
And floateth away in the song,
And blessing and beauty that fill
The June with such heavenly delight,
Aspires to the glories that still
Are treasured afar in the height,
The boundless empyrean of soul
The region where seraphs abide,
Where the waves of eternity roll;
Aspires to the glories that hide
Afar from material eyes
Except as they dimly are seen
Portrayed in the earth and the skies,
The flowers and the mantle of green

III.

Come, Lilly, forsaking awhile,
The needle, the pencil, the book,
And wearing thy pleasantest smile,
Come out in the meadows and look,
And look till thy spirit shall see
The wonders that poets behold;
Make friends to the bird and the bee,
From flower-cups gather the golds
And over the musical chime
That charmeth the delicate ear,
List those echoing voices sublime
That none but the past can hear.

IV

O, Lilly! the father above
Has given these glorious days,
And hallows them with all his love—
Let us hallow them with his praise.
No beauty of nature can bless
The spirit that gropes in the dark;
That soul is a realm of distress
That love never lit with his spark.
All ravishing billows of tune,
All sunniest ripples of song,
And all the dear wonders of June,
That float in her presence along,
Are nought but a noisy display,
Till love shall bequeath a delight
To bloom with the blossoms by day,
To shine with the heavens by night,
To mingle its voice with the chime
That warbles and shouts in the air,
To leap in unsyllabled rhyme
And clothe all the spirit in prayer.

V.

Then, Lilly, forsaking awhile
The needle, the pencil, the book,
And wearing thy pleasantest smile,
Sweet soul of my soul, come and look,
Aye, look on the rapture and hope,
That God has created for thee,
That brightens futurity's scope,
Enlightens eternity's sea.

Then turn to thyself and thine own,
Give love to the spirits that love,
And worship the Father alone,
That ruler who dwelleth above.

THE PIONEER.

His form is bent; his head is grey;
His limbs are long and slender.
But still beneath his woolen vest,
The heart is true and tender.

His comrades long are in the clay;
Their wooden head-boards rotten;
And in the modern neighborhood,
Their very names forgotten.

He walks serenely thro' the fields;
Old shadows seem to follow,
Again he sees the tawny deer
Go leaping down the hollow.

He hears once more the rifle's ring,
The hunters shouting gladly;
On yonder hill the wounded bear
Again gives battle madly.

He hears the pheasant's booming drum;
He hears the turkey calling;

The thudding maul; the ringing axe;
The crash of timber falling.

He sees the little cabin home;
The tiny patch of clearing,
Where once he dwelt with wife and boys,
No breath of evil fearing.

"Ah, well!" he sighs; "she's sleeping now;
The eldest boys are with her.
I very soon shall go to them,
Since they may not come hither."

The tear that glistens in his eye
Falls down a moment after;
For, silvery, echoing up the lane,
He hears his grandchild's laughter.

The past and present strangely blend
Before his mental vision;
Yet love, that makes the dreary wolds
Appear like fields elysian,

Still paints along his early days
The fairest scenes of pleasure,
And garners stores of happy thought
No rhythmic art can measure.

No words bespeak his heart so warm
As did the backwoods greeting;
No preacher has such power as he
Who held the backwoods meeting.

He knows of many a merry time
At reaping, rolling, raising,
Or, on the jolly husking nights,
With cheerful torches blazing.

From many a good wife's quilting bout
He treasures home-spun blisses,
Where old folks talked, and young folks played
Their games of forfeit kisses.

The lazy Indian still he scorns,
Their squaws and their papooses;
He thinks, God made them; but, no doubt,
For undiscovered uses.

Where now a dozen turnpikes stretch
Stiff lines between the meadows
He knew a single Indian trail
That wound thro' forest shadows.

A dozen villages he sees
Beside their railroad stations,
Where once a single trading post
Supplied the settlers' rations.

A hundred rushing trains go by;
He hears them scream and thunder,
And laughs to think how they would shake
His backwoods world with wonder.

How strange the ways they practice now,
This new time emphasizing,
He says, and with the uttered thought,
Grows loud soliloquizing.

“With clattering instruments at church,
And dapper youngsters preaching,
And, for the congregations’ hymn,
A dozen lassies screeching.

“And then for all our social joys,
And good old-fashioned greetings,
The sinners mask at fancy balls,
The saints at bible meetings.

“You rest at ease in fancy homes,
Your thoughts on high careering;
But give me back my wife and boys,
And give me back my clearing.

“And give me back my rifle gun,
My forests, deer, and pheasants,
And I will prove you, any day,
As tame as British peasants.

“Your girls grow fine; your boys grow proud
And vain; O! more’s the pity;
There’s scarce a youth in all the land
But’s crazy ’bout the city.

“It’s true there’s boys that grow up now—
Pale, sick, unlikely creatures,
With foreheads broad and dwindled limbs,
And strange, unnatural features.

“Who might be doctors, if they would,
Or preach without much harming,
But all the stoutest, brightest ones
Should steady stick to farming.

“Give me the lad with sinewy arm
For box or wrestles ready,
To lift his share at hand-spike end,
Or hold a rifle steady.

“And I will after show a man
Whose heart is tender human,
And brave in every hour of need,
And true as steel to woman.

“But I, why should I moralize;
I’m but a dotard growing,
And death cuts now a reaper’s swath
Beside his ancient mowing.

“It seems so strange, the forests gone;
The very stumps are rotten;
And half the fields I helped to clear
I’ve really now forgotten.

“The post-horse, lagging with his load,
Across th’ unbridged morasses,
He reached us once or twice a month
With letters for the lasses.

“But now they run on flying wheels,
Or fly on lighting pinions,
And in the twinkling of an eye
Arrive from far dominions.

“For church and school-house, once a hut
Of logs did half the county,
But heaven as freely then as now
Dispensed her largest bounty.

"We flailed the wheat with twisted sticks,
By steam you thresh and clean it,
And rush your four horse reapers where
We used to hook and glean it.

"But why go on this cat'logue style
With what we did, and you do;
We did the best we could and that's
The way in knowledge you grew.

"The old folks labored long and well
To build the rude foundation,
And you have wro't no more than we
With all your cultivation.

"We conquered forests, cleared the land.
Our work, let no man scorn it;
But you who follow, follow well;
Complete; refine; adorn it.

"The olden music, olden songs,
The pioneer rejoicings,
Still linger on my listening ear
With myriad happy voicings.

"No wives are like our dear old wives,
No neighbors like our neighbors,
No boys are half as bold as ours,
So cheerful at their labors.

"No ladies in their rustling silks
And gimcracks half so winning,
As were our girls in linsey frocks
From yarn of their own spinning.

"Full many a rough, unseemly man
Who shared my early labor,
Looks noble through the mist of years,
For was he not my neighbor?

"And so when all your heads are white,
And death comes creeping nearer,
You'll think the old ways, perfect ways,
Old friends grow hourly dearer."

A partridge whistled by the way,
A blackbird trilled above it,
A red bird sang "O, sunny day,"
The robin "How I love it!"

"Ho!" cried the pioneer, "you birds
Are bent on early pillage,"
And so, his musing spoiled, he walked
Quite briskly toward the village.

EXPERIENCES.

I.

How sweet youth's rosy morning,
When the dream of life is new,
And with its magic glories
Enchants the partial view!
What happy woofs are woven
Of fancy's golden threads!
What crowns of fadeless honor
Are made for youthful heads!

II.

Sweetly all thy wild birds sang,
Till the budding woodlands rang,
And the brooklets' murmuring voice
Made the meadow lands rejoice,
And the blossoms' pictured rhyme,
Mingled with the vernal chime
Till the pulses of the air
Beat to music every where,
Beat to music soft and low,
 Beat to music wild and glad,
In the days of long ago,
 Ere my heart was sore and sad.

III.

Wearily I wander down
All the worn hills bare and brown,
And the gloomy skies appear
Heavier, darker, every year;
Yet through doubt and sorrow's pall,
Many sands of sunshine fall—
Many blessings chide my tears,
Many hopes dispel my fears—
Till from out the present gloom
See I lands of song and bloom,
Pleasant valleys reaching far,
Where the heavenly glories are,
Where celestial Asphodels
 Bloom along life's pulsing river,
That with boundless being swells
 Nearer to the throne forever.

IV.

O! may being's fragile bark,
Speeding onward through the dark,
With its white sails once dispel
All the gloom in which I dwell,
Let my fancy's picture be
To the blest reality,
As the poet's rhyming art
To the poem in his heart;
As the painter's feeble dyes
To green fields and sunny skies;
As the lover's halting prose
To the boundless love that flows
Over all his beings' might;
As a song-bird's feeble flight
To the west winds's odorous play;
As the night is to the day;
Let my visions reach before,
To the fair unclouded shore;
Let me see it once and know
Thither shall my being flow,
Onward from the hills of time,
Mingling with the endless chime,
 Echoing down life's pulsing river
Flowing with its faultless rhyme
 Nearer to the throne forever.

V.

There, upon that pleasant shore.
Youthful dreams are dreams no more;
Youthful hopes no more deceive,
But the pleasant songs they weave—

Songs of happiness and praise,
Sound through never ending days.

VI.

Narrow dogmas I decline,
Only is this *credo* mine;
Youth that blossoms on to age,
Love that knows its heritage,
Noble deed and gentle heart,
Friendly smile and tender art,
Fearless soul and manly might,
Battling ever for the right,
Bear us nearer heavenly weal,
Than a thousand bigots' zeal,
And through love's baptismal flood
Must we look for future good.

ORALIE.

Far over the regions of sorrow,
Across the dark river of sighs,
I know that the sunlight to-morrow,
Shall glorify Oralie's eyes.

But what if my Oralie perish,
As perished the rose, in a day,
And what if the beauty I cherish,
Should turn to be festering clay;

What balm could my spirit discover,
In homilies dismal as pain,

About the dark valley passed over,
And death being Oralie's gain?

Is it gain for the maid in her beauty,
To fade and depart ere she knows
The measures of love and of duty,
Of life, with its blisses and woes?

Ah, no! 't would be loss for the morning
To burst in a moment to noon,
The twilight with golden adorning,
Must preface the stars and the moon.

Though morning in life be the sweetest,
The best ripened life must be long,
And the best ripened life is completest,
No matter how sorrows may throng.

We ripen in storms of affliction,
No sorrow nor toil is in vain,
We gather a sweet benediction,
From days of expressionless pain.

And O! when the spring-tide is flowing,
And life is as buoyant as song,
And when the bright summer is glowing
In rapturous billows along,

'Tis then that the spirit expanding,
Like blossoms that open at day,
Leaps up to the highest commanding,
Of love that possesses its way.

So upward, thro' darkness and sorrow,
Through pleasures that halo the night,
We grow till we reach the to-morrow,
Expand, till we enter the light.

APPARITIONS.

When love is reigning in the heart,
And peace within the breast,
And evening's mellow silences
Have soothed our cares to rest,

Adown the skies of other years,
Where memory's light is shed
Upon their spirit pinions,
Return the gentle dead.

And haunting all the atmosphere,
They gather once again:
We meet the children's laughing eyes,
We greet the noble men.

They are not ghostly phantoms now,
Nor tenants of the sky,
But glowing with emotions pure,
That were not made to die.

Still in their human kindness, yet
The same we knew before,
They struggled through the icy stream
And gained the sinless shore.

And through the hours of sunshine,
That faded long ago,
We, hand in hand, with them retrace
The paths we used to know.

And hear the same old songs again,
That died upon their ears,
Before the richer music
Of heaven's eternal spheres.

How lovely now each cool retreat
We sought in days of old,
And words that then seemed idle dross,
Are now the perfect gold.

The living may be dead to us,
The dead shall never die;
They haunt our memories everywhere,
They fill the spirits' sky.

And on their snow-white pinions,
They wait for us above,
For heaven would be devoid of bliss,
Without their patient love.

THE CHILDREN.

The noisy voices of the babbling day,
Can never hush the echoes of our grief,
Nor little pleasures vanishing and brief
Nor formal strength of any cold belief,
For sorrow hath above them all her way.

But even sorrow bears a gentle heart,
Subdued and pensive in our thought she dwells,
Assuages mirth and boisterous joy dispels,
And drops into the Spirit's deepest wells,
The anchors of her sure prevailing art.

And often in the hour of joy she comes,
And with the faces of the children calls
My soul away from all the festal halls,
The flickering lights, the rows of painted walls,
To the sweet country and its sweeter homes.

The little graves I know are by the wood,
The children's school is very near at hand,
And nearer still the little church doth stand
A mile away dear father owned some land,
And there the children grew so fair and good.

'Twas in the grove of maples, lovely trees,
The children chattered at their little plays,
And sported in their simple country ways,
And hours of love grew into lovely days,
And so they lived and grew in joyous ease.

But when there neared a time of wild despair,
When death was curdling all the sister's blood,
She bade me take her gently as I could,
Into the shadows of that pleasant wood,
Once more, once more, to breathe its balmy air.

Her thankful eyes, her failing, thankful voice,
I see, I hear, I never shall forget,
The sad-eyed brother with his cheeks so wet,
What are twelve years?—a breath, I see them yet,
I see them yet, nor have I any choice,

But pour my soul in a melodious rain,
Half tears and half a melancholy rune,
A roundelay for those who died so soon,
A slender thread of song in saddest tune,
A rill of music from a fount of pain.

They could not dwell apart, for flowed the tide
Of their sweet lives, as waters in one rill,
The sister died, the brother smiling still
Passed on, his little mission to fulfill
A few short days then rested at her side.

Where are the children? in what pleasant dawns
Do they arise to hear the morning bird,
To see the glittering dew drops lightly stirred
On pendant sprays, to call the bleating herd
From their green breakfast on the glimmering lawns?

Or when the sun goes down at shut of day,
To watch the wonder of the painted mist,—
Now waves of gold, now domes of amethyst,
Now bowers of rest where angels might keep tryst,
And shout with joy to see the bright array.

Perhaps all seasons where the children roam,
In their ethereal life, are times of praise,
And they forgetful of our little days,
Move on and on in ever widening ways
Of joy and bliss in their celestial home.

They are not out of God, they cannot be
Dissevered wholly from us though they tread
In unknown paths, but yet we know them dead;
Their forms are dust, their little lusters fled
They are but ashes, ashes! what are we?

What they but ashes! Do we vainly trust,
That these poor bodies which so soon decay,
Are but the caskets, wrought of finest clay,
In which we hide each through his little day,
Then soar away and let them go to dust?

I cannot think of death as aught but change,
The eggs must break to let young eagles out,
The acorns burst before the oaks can sprout,
And the worm body sink in gloom and doubt,
To give the spirit free to widest range.

The years we live are but a passing breath,
But one poor quaver in an endless song,
A ripple, where a million oceans throng;
And he who tarries longest, stays not long,
From the unknown results that follow death.

Whatever those results may be, we trust
That nothing harms the children, nothing ill
Befalls them on their journeys, love's sweet will
Is ever more the law that guides them, still
We cannot choose, but weep above their dust.

Somewhere in this wide universe they dwell,
 Somewhere they wander onward, as of old,
 From joy to joy in cycles manifold
 As are the worlds on night's blue chart unrolled,
 I know not where, God knows, and all is well.

THE DECORATION OF THE SOLDIERS' GRAVES.

MAY, 1869.

Above these graves, no fettered slaves
 Yield forced obeisance to the dead,
 But children come like pleasant waves
 Of sunshine, from the summer sky,
 And like glad spirits floating by
 Strew flowers above each lowly head.

Wave banners, wave! above each grave;
 O starry ensign! fairest, best,
 Emblem of all they died to save,
 Thou cloud by day and fire by night
 To lead the world to freedom's light,
 Shake all thy stars above their rest.

Yield, joyous spring, thy wealth that brings
 The memory of their priceless love,
 Once more as on their viewless wings
 Through all this goodly land of ours,
 They meet us in this month of flowers,
 Like blessings wafted from above.

Loud rolled the drum, the land cried come,
And weeping freedom led them forth,
The children stood with white lips dumb
With terror, when they heard the call,
And treason's sulphurous carnival
Went sweeping o'er the blinded earth.

The thousands meet, with hurrying feet,
With deathless zeal to do or die,
Now in the ranks with life replete,
Now pierced by shot or torn by shell,
Behold them in the battle's hell,
Now dying in the tents they lie.

The life blood parts from precious hearts,
And tender eyes above them weep,
And woman with her gentle arts
Has toiled and wept for them in pain,
And toiled and wept and toiled again,
But now how peacefully they sleep.

And from this sod, we pray, O! God,
That freedom's holy hymn shall rise
Even from the dumbest human clod
Till every lingering taint of death
Bequeathed by slavery's stygian breath
Be parted by the sacrifice.

And for these dead, who toiled and bled,
And suffered for us let there be
The deathless flowers of memory spread
With more than childhood's tender grace,
In every heart, in every place
Where shines the sun of liberty.

O, mighty land! united stand,
 Nor let it be in vain they died,
 O! North and South join heart and hand,
 Forget the treason and the blight;
 Remember only truth and right,
 Forget all cruel hate and pride.

From gulf to lake, let all forsake,
 Their ancient strife, no more be foes,
 Join sea to sea with bands and make
 The lightning on your errands run,
 And for the country toil, as one,
 'Till it shall blossom like the rose.

Bloom, blossoms, bloom and chase the gloom,
 Shake, glorious banner, all thy stars,
 Above each consecrated tomb;
 Roll, drum, and bugle, sound the call!
 They died for us, who of us all
 Are ready for the future wars?

The war of right, 'gainst cruel might,
 The war of God against the wrong;
 Who, will maintain the moral fight,
 The same these heroes fought with steel?
 Who, battle for the common weal?
 Who, face sin's hydra-headed throng?

Strew sweetest flowers from vernal bowers;
 But were we worthy we would be,
 Brave warriors, 'gainst the evil powers,
 With deathless courage, boundless faith,
 Dare, even as they, unto the death,
 And honor thus their chivalry.

SKAPTER JOKUL.—1783.*

I.

Never had come such terror
In tide of wind or war,
Never the old Gods thundered
Such fearful wrath afar.
Locked in his cave was Odin,
Dead was the strong God, Thor,
And over the peaks of Iceland,
And over the Arctic sea,
To the far-off coasts of Norway
The Christian faith was free.

II.

Up from the rocky summits
Of the mountain bold and bare,
Leaps the molten wonder
High in the frozen air.
Under the eye of the North Star
Like a hundred cities on fire,
Writhes, and pours, and bellows,
And roars, with a mad desire
To reach the bended heavens,

*In 1783, Skapter Jokul, in Iceland, sent forth two streams of lava which flowed in opposite directions. One of these streams was fifty miles long and twelve broad, and the other forty miles long and seven broad; each averaging one hundred feet deep, and when pressed into gorges, as was the case in some parts of the course, six hundred feet deep. The eruption continued for two years, and destroyed twenty villages and nine thousand inhabitants.—*Sanborn Tenney's Geology*, page 245.

And set the stars on fire,
The fiery soul of Jokul,
Till the terrible flood rolls down,
And burning on to the ocean,
Over village, and farm, and town,
Molten metals, and earth and rock,
With storm, and thunder and earthquake shock,
Twelve miles wide and fifty long,
With many a radiant branch and prong,
Now hurtling between the mountains steep,
The red flood surges six fathoms deep;
Now spreading over the icy plain,
Now pouring into the boiling main,
Ever and ever the tide of fire
Rolls and thunders in mad desire.

III.

The wing of the borean glory
Was fainter than sunset dye,
While the fiery soul of the Jokul
Went leaping into the sky.
Over his icy kingdom,
Glared the great white bear,
Upon the fiery torrent
High in the startled air,
Till a breath of silent terror
Entered his gloomy soul,
And he shambled off in the darkness,
Away to the frozen pole.
The morse, and seal, and sea-cow,
And sea-lion saw the glow
Upon many a shining ice-berg,
And many a floating floe,

And with dull, unreasoning wonder,
From out each icy lai,
They shook with fear at the brightness
And the strange heat in the air.

IV.

But Oh! the fires baptismal,—
A deluge of wrath and woe;—
Over nine thousand people
Swept with resistless flow;
Nine thousand toilers and thinkers,
Husband, and wife, and child,
The lover, and his beloved,
Went down in the torrent wild,
Only to Christ a whisper, only to God a sigh,
Then a sinking down in the fiery mass,
That poured as from on high.

V.

Not Odin from his wind caves,
Nor Thor with murderous ire,
Nor Encelades in far-off Ætna,
With his eternal fire,
Shook the form of the Jokul,
And gave the pent flames birth,
But the resistless fiery spirit,
In the molten heart of earth;
The spirit that like a fountain,
Heaves up the surging deep,
And lifts the pleasant islands
To bloom where the waters sleep,
That shakes with shiv'ring earthquake

The lofty mountains down,
 And sets the blue waves laughing
 Over sunken city and town:
 To-day it raiseth a continent,
 To-morrow it sinketh a state,
 It openeth here an inland sea,
 And there an ocean gate;
 Resistless and remorseless,
 It giveth life or death,
 A smiling plain, or a mountain chain,
 As with capricious breath;
 Yet it worketh the will of the Master,
 Through all of the countless years,
 To fit and purify the earth,
 Till the last dross disappears,
 And our mother of the restless soul
 Shines with the perfect spheres.

FRIENDSHIP, LOVE AND TRUTH.

I.—FRIENDSHIP.

O! my friend, I see you're falling,
 Let me aid you while I can;
 Yonder Love and Truth are calling,
 Forward still, and be a man.

O! my Brother, wildly burning,
 Is the fever in thy brain,—
 Let me watch for health's returning,
 Let me gently soothe thy pain.

Though you toil with ceaseless labor,
Yet in poverty you sink,—
I will lead you, troubled neighbor,
Far away from ruin's brink.

Sister, in thy house of sorrow,
I will enter like the sun,—
And its naked walls shall borrow
Beauty from my benison.

II.—LOVE.

O! I gather very near you,
I will press you to my heart;
Are you foul? I do not fear you,
I will heal you with my art.

Brother, in your lamentation,
Sister, in your darkest hour,
Orphan, in your desolation,
Know ye not my fruitful power?

How I make the desert places
Blossom like the morning rose?
Wipe the tears from haggard faces,
Bear the erring from their woes?

I am Life and Resurrection;
I am Charity and Peace;
He who voteth my rejection,
Wills that Life and Hope shall cease.

III.—TRUTH.

Not an error stands before me—

I will cleave you through and through;
Though you swear that you adore me,
All your falsehood springs to view.

No seductive adulation

Lures me with its rhythmic roll;
I will send with exultation,
Swift conviction to your soul.

Not a mercenary lieth,

But my soul grows hot and wroth;
And “destroy! destroy!” it crieth,
Tho’ you reap a mower’s swath.

And I scourge each hateful demon,

That the soul may yet be wise;
And each brother man, a freeman,
Fit for any paradise.



DAYS OF BATTLE.

DAYS OF BATTLE.

PRELUDE.

Now, happily, the days of peace have come,
And to their homes the soldiers have returned,
All but the unreturning, they have passed
Beyond the boundaries of our earthly joys,
And we shall see their like no more. No more
Where the red hell of battle roars and raves,
Shall they be called to struggle with the foe,
To roll and welter in the tides that rush
From their own hearts, and feel the ebbing life
Grow fainter, fainter, till the senses swim
And all the world spins round and all is night,
Is night, from whence no morn shall ever rise.
But we remember all the woeful times,
We cherish every noble heart that bled,
And every deed that sent ecstatic thrills
To run like lightning through the anxious land
And tremble in the souls that loved the cause
Of freedom and the nation; none the less
We honor all who did their duty well,

All patriots, soldiers, statesmen, all who wrought
Their best for freedom and the father's flag,
And so in memory of the valiant days
Recall the unpruned measures of the time
The rough responses of an anxious soul,
To the wild martial echoes ringing round,
That like the slogan of the border Scots
Called all the clans to battle and as loud,
Called freedom's spirit to the stricken land.

INDIANA'S DEAD.

Oh! sing the funeral roundelay,
Let warmest tears be shed,
And rear the mighty monuments
For Indiana's dead.

On many a field of victory
They slumber in their gore,
They rest beneath the shining sands
On ocean's sounding shore.

Where frown Virginia's mountain chains,
By Rappahannock's side,
Upon the heights of Maryland,
Her gallant sons have died.

The broken woods of Tennessee
Are hallowed by their blood,
It consecrates Missouri's plains
And Mississippi's flood.

Kentucky's dark and bloody ground
Is furrowed by their graves,
They sleep in Alabama's soil,
By Pamlico's dark waves.

And Mississippi's poison swamps,
Arkansas river ways,
And Pennsylvania's pleasant towns,
Attest her heroes' praise.

They saw them in the ranks of war,
Oh! memory dark with woe!
They saw them yield to death who ne'er
Had yielded to the foe.

Then weave the chaplets fair and well
To grace each noble name,
That grateful Indiana writes
Upon her scroll of fame.

Her sons have led the battle's van
Where many fought and fell,
With all th' immortal Gracchi's zeal,
The hero faith of Tell;

And from their fields of glory looked
Their last upon the skies,
And calmly met the honored death
The fallen hero dies.

And in the dreary doubt and gloom,
The sick ward's tainted breath
Have thousands met the harder fate,
The slow consuming death;

ON SEEING A PHOTOGRAPH.

The weary torture day by day,
The fever and the pain,
The yearnings ever at the heart,
The pressure on the brain;

The longing for the gentle voice,
The old remembered song,
And all the dear delights of home
That memory treasures long.

Oh! Indiana's noble dead,
With fadeless wreaths encrowned,
Shall bless the places where they fell
And make them freedom's ground.

Then twine their praise with freedom's song,
Their names with freedom's name,
And make each heart a monument
Of all their deathless fame.

ON SEEING A PHOTOGRAPH OF HACKLEMAN.

O! Corinth, streets were red with blood,
And many a noble soul that day,
Cast off its clayey form to go
Again into its kindred clay.

And there amid the true and brave,
And leading in the battle's van,
Was one whose daily life had earned
For him the noblest name—a man.

He fell as heroes ever fall:

He died a more than hero death,
Content for freedom's holy cause,
To yield his latest flickering breath.

But gazing on his pictured face,
Warm with its wealth of love and life,
I scarcely feel that Hackleman
Has fallen in the murderous strife.

I seem to read a prophecy,
Still hanging on those eloquent lips,
More sweet than all the nectared blooms,
From which at morn the wild bee sips.

A glory for the coming time,
A sure fulfillment of our hope,
A blessed ray of heavenly light,
To brighten all the future's scope.

And by its meaning men are taught,
Like him, to put their trust in God,
And yet believe, though days are dark,
And seas of blood are poured abroad,

That still our country shall remain,
That peace and freedom's angels stand,
Already on our trembling shores,
To bless for aye, the bleeding land.

Gold of the pen, and steel of sword,
And eagle wings of eloquence,
Strong, polished towers of argument,
And flowery wreaths of poet sense;

THE PROCLAMATION.

We see them all within thy face.—
Not long ago we knew them all,—
Their influence liveth and shall live;
It did not perish in thy fall.

Then rest thou, soldier, patriot, friend;
Thy worth survives thee, and at last
When all the terrors of the war,
And its long agony are past;

When names are garnered up for fame,
Thine shall be bright amid the throng
That twined with fadeless wreaths of green,
Shall claim the meed of deathless song.

THE PROCLAMATION.

All hail! the President, all hail!
The glorious work that he has done!
No prophecy of truth shall fail;
No darkness from the light be won;
His words are made of truth and light;—
“All shall be free, our flag shall wave
No more for Slavery’s vaunted might,
But bloom for aye above its grave.”
The fiend that from the Nation’s birth
Has on us cast its withering spell,
And sought to make the beauteous earth
A province of its native hell,
Shall die the death, the land be free.
Auspicious morn of Sixty-Three

Eternal glory shall be thine,
A Sabbath sun forever shine,
Upon thy presence, thine shall be
A time for thanks and jubilee.

What though the demon tear and rend
Us, with its dying throes to-day:
When all this bloody strife shall end,
These sulphurous clouds be rolled away,
Land of the free, then truly so,
What hallowed peace shall be thine own,
To recompense for all the woe
And bitter days that thou hast known.

Unto our God be thanks and praise!
Who guides us through the gloom and doubt,
And who, from all these grievous days,
Worketh his own good purpose out;
And from the graves of those who fall
And perish in the sickening strife,
With sweetest voice of love doth call
New hope, for sorrowing man, to life.

O! holy freedom, clasp the land
In thy embrace from sea to sea
For it is thine—thy gentle hand
Shall guide its course eternally.
Thine are the vales, and thine the hills,
And thine our every sounding shore,
The mountains and the vocal rills,
The ocean with its deathless roar;
The corn fields of the North are thine,
The land of cotton calls thee there,

The cane-leaves in thy presence shine;
Blest spirit, welcome everywhere
The stars and stripes are cast abroad,
And prosper in the smiles of God.

THE PLAYMATE.

We romped in the woods together,
We swung on the apple-tree,
And chased in the sunny weather
The butterfly and bee.

His locks were a crown of splendor,
His heart was a fount of joy,
Gentle and brave and tender,
My darling playmate boy.

And now from the storm and thunder,
And doubt and gloom to-day,
I go back in childish wonder
To the spots where we used to play.

The threads of our broken story,
Renewing line by line,
I sketch the shadowless glory,
That might have been his and mine.

I paint him a goodly mansion
Down by the river side;
And a farm whose broad expansion,
Is green with meadows wide.

I paint me a little cottage
Hard by the beechen grove,
Where I sweeten my humble pottage
With the poet's wealth of love.

He walketh spirit laden
With the choicest truth of life
To greet the smiling maiden,
That is now my neighbor's wife.

And I—but I paint no longer;
Our hopes were doomed to die,
For the hand of fate was stronger,
Than either he or I.

The grass has grown above him,
For many and many years,
And the maiden who used to love him
Forgotten her early tears.

The summer school was over,
The farmers had left their corn,
And the fields of wheat and clover
Of all their pride were shorn,

When the neighbors met together
And down thro' deepening gloom
Of the dreamy autumn weather,
They bore him to the tomb.

I still see the sorrowing faces
That haunted me many a day,
In each of the sunny places
Where we used to romp and play.

Away in the life elysian,
 Does he think of his childish days?
 Does ever his spirit vision
 Reach back to the pleasant ways,

We trode, ere the future's glory
 Had faded line by line,
 Into the sorrowful story
 That now is his and mine?

Or does the calm investing
 His spirit's serenest flow,
 Forbid it one moment resting
 In the spots we used to know?

Life's way is dim with sorrow,
 But our childish hopes still twine
 A wreath for that golden morrow
 That may be his and mine.

LIBERTY.

Liberty, O, Liberty!
 He who truly loveth thee—
 Soul of mercy, truth and love,
 Essence of the life above,
 Man's divinest heritage
 Living on through every age,—
 Walks upon the earthly soil,
 Glorious in the smiles of God.

Liberty, O, Liberty!
Whoso dares to die for thee,
Though unhonored be his name,
On the fading scroll of fame,
Though his grave be green and low,
Where the tangled wild flowers grow,
He shall fill a noble part,
In the universal heart.

Liberty, O, Liberty!
He who bendeth not the knee
At thy pure and holy shrine
Is not worthy thee or thine;
He's a craven-hearted knave,
Born a despot or a slave,
And his best repose shall be
In the arms of tyranny.

Liberty, O, Liberty!
When the nations bow to thee,
Anarchy and sin shall die,
War shall close his vulture eye
And the day so long foretold,
By the mighty seers of old,
Shall in peaceful splendor come,
With its glad millennium.

NOVEMBER 8, 1864.

NOVEMBER 8TH, 1864.

Oh! my people! chosen people!
 Raise aloud the glad acclaim,
To the glory of the nation,
 And the traitors fear and shame.
Out of war's tremendous peril
 And its desolating gloom,
Rises up the plant of freedom
 Crowned with everlasting bloom.

Light the dull skies of November
 With the flames of victory;
Let the land be gay with banners,
 And the earth hold jubilee.
Widow, in thy garb of sorrow,
 Mother, weeping o'er thy slain,
Know ye that your fallen heroes,
 Did not fight and die in vain?

Lo! 'tis liberty's evangel
 Entering in the land anew,
With the radiant stars of morning,
 Constellating in the blue,
All the brighter for the sorrow,
 More enduring for the pain
That has rebaptized the nation
 Into freedom's love again.

Chosen people! Faithful people!
 From your countless hills rejoice,
From your homes of peace and plenty
 Raise aloud the thankful voice.

From your fields of deathless glory,
Where your heroes slumber well,
Let the grand and mighty volume
Of triumphal chorus swell.

Lo! the shackles fall asunder,
And the lash has lost its power,
Masters quake and tyrants tremble
In the presence of the hour,
Glorious hour when freedom's chosen
Hold a nation's jubilee,
And the world takes up the chorus,
Men are equal, man is free!

Not to faction, not to party,
Does this triumph hour belong,
But to man in all the future,
To the right against the wrong,
It is freedom's, it is heaven's,
'Tis for every tribe and tongue;
Then in pæans high and holy,
Let the victory be sung.

LINCOLN.

INDIANAPOLIS, APRIL 30, A. D. 1865.

The voice is hushed, the heart is still,
The lids enclose the earnest eyes,
That only wake for Zion's hill,
And only beam for Paradise.

We kindle brightly to thy praise,
We melt in sorrow at thy bier,
And wonder in the boundless days,
When God shall every truth insphero

In sinless orbits of delight,
What crowns thy spirit brow shall wear,
When past the terror and the night,
Thou soarest into morning there.

O! choral lips of love and song;—
The world's harmonic multitude
That through the ages dim and long,
Have prophesied the coming good,

Philosopher and saint and seer,
Of every age, and race and clime,
Behold the promised days are near,
Auroral on the hills of time.

We read the blessed morrow's sign
That comes to hallow every place,
In every feature, every line
Of that upturned and calmest face.

From this dear sacrifice we learn
The future's full reality,
How freedom's flame shall mount and burn
Above the tomb of slavery.

How age on age shall pile its weight,
Yet through the twilight dim and far,
Among the wise and good and great,
Shall Lincoln shine, a morning star.

The useless lash, the broken chain,
Black swarms of traffic turned to men,
War fruiting with eternal gain,
That ripens into peace again;

These glorify the places where
Thy paths have been, O, true and brave!
And melodize the western air,
To sing of rest above thy grave.

Rest, patriot, martyr, saviour, friend,
Defender of the poor and weak!
Thy glory shall not have an end
While history has a voice to speak.

In deathless harmonies of song,
In Alpine heights of eloquence,
Where hearts are tender, love is strong,
Shall live thy sweet beneficence,

And breathe its blessings evermore,
Through all the scope of coming years,
While thou on freedom's wings shall soar
In love's celestial atmospheres,

In love's celestial atmospheres
That musical shall ever be
With this—that charms immortal ears—
“Through Christ the Lord, he made men free.”

NOVEMBER.

November's cheerless skies of rain
Are ushering in the winter's gloom,
And orchard, forest, field, and plain,
Are shorn of greenness, song and bloom.

No more the sparrow in the bush,
Nor robin on the maple tree,
Awakes with song the summer hush
Of nature's odorous melody.

All tuneless are the solemn groves,
Save that the brooklet murmurs on,
Repeating still its ancient loves,
As though love's seasons were not gone.

The year, that once so free and bold,
Leaped down the glowing hills of life,
Dwarfs his bent form beneath the cold,
And shivers in the wild wind's strife.

On beating wings the raven flits,
A ghost of darkness and despair;
Far in the wood the great owl sits
And pours his horror on the air.

A mist obscures the dreary town,
The streets are silent lines of gloom,
And the lone footman's garb of brown,
Seems woven in death's fated loom.

The wild war rages, doubt and grief
Are in the land from sea to sea,
Till peace seems like some lost belief
We cherished in our infancy.

But even now, with healing wing,
Hope rides in battle's sulphurous car;
And melodies that angels sing,
Are heard in lapses of the war.

Spring comes, and summer follows soon;
Earth leaps from out the winter's thrall
Into the laps of May and June,
That spread their mantles over all.

So liberty and peace shall rise
From under desolation's hoof,
And even through the sodden skies,
Smiles grim November with the proof.

II.

When life goes trembling down the hill,
In some November far away,
And ebon clouds of boding ill
Obscure the shining light of day,

O! may the solemn scene command
Some blessing for the great unknown;
Some staff whereon the dying hand
May rest before its strength be gone.

Some ray to penetrate the gloom,
To bathe the sombre hills in light,
Shed its soft splendor on the tomb,
And glorify the awful night.

Some melody of melodies,
To sound across the dismal sea,
With soft and vibrant harmonies,
To blend with purer harmony.

While loved ones that have gone before,
Lean downward in their robes of gold,
And give in love's seraphic lore
Their rapturous welcomes manifold!

Their rapturous welcomes manifold,
Until the spirit spurns its clay;
Leaps upward from the cumbering, mold
Death yields to life, and night to day.

SONG OF TRIUMPH.

O! jubilant Nation,
Receive thy salvation:
The days of thy bondage are done.
Leap, heart of the people!
Ring bells in the steeple!
Shout, waters, the joy as you run!
Roll, cannons, your thunder,
Rebellion goes under,
The victory of freedom is won!

The nation's great error,
The treason and terror,
It warmed into hatred and strife,
Lie prone in disaster,
No evil-eyed master
Shall ever recall them to life;
Jehovah has spoken,
The fetters are broken,
And peace smileth down on the strife.

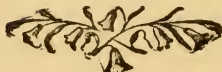
Then gather, ye freemen,
Our landsmen and seamen,
Our boys in your infantry blue!
Set the welkin a ringing,
Set the islands a singing,
With a joy that shall thrill thro' and thro'
The heart of the Nation,
Till its outward vibration
Sets other lands singing it too.

The father's ideal
Has grown to the real,
And wieldeth the scepter of might;
The old declaration
And the new proclamation,—
The soul and the heart of the fight,—
Triumph over the sorrow,
With their hope for the morrow
With their promise of Union and right.

O! the bright lumination
Of the great proclamation,
It shall shine through the vista of time,
It shall flame down the ages,

It shall burn on the pages
Of historian and poet sublime,
Till the world shall receive it,
Till the tyrants believe it,
A death shot to slavery and crime.

Then jubilant Nation,
Receive thy salvation,
The days of thy bondage are done;
Praise the heroes who fought for
The statesmen who sought for
The victory our armies have won;
And the glory be given;
To our Father in Heaven,
While the ages of freedom shall run,



EARLIER POEMS.



EARLIER POEMS.

PRELUDE.

You asked me dear friend, in the fair month of roses,
To write you some verses in elegant rhyme,
All radiant with summer and cheerful with posies,
And delightfully sweet in their musical chime,
And I made for answer if you will remember,
That though summer glorified all with its blushes
Still deep in my soul was the grief of November,
And my sorrowful notes would not chord with
thrushes;
But said, I would gather the old songs together,
The rude rhymes I chattered in other sad days,
The notes that went trilling in all sorts of weather,
And sought only your never critical praise.
So here, I present them, unpruned, the old ditties
Of sorrow and love, and the lyrical notions
Of freedom and labor; not fit for the cities,
But just the rude offspring of country emotions;
So take them dear friend, if they give any pleasure,
Or charm you one moment away from your pain,
My toil is repaid in that bountiful measure
That comes when we know that we've toiled not in vain

A WINTER WALK.

Winter has glories summer may not boast,
Though, to the sordid, worldly-minded man,
Its wealth of brilliant pageantry is lost,
Nor has his mental eye the power to scan
The beauties that, like banners wide unfurled,
Float everywhere about the ice-bound world.

But to the child of nature these are fair
As are the riches of midsummer's bloom,
When gay birds chatter, and the mellow air
Is laden with the incense—like perfume
Of bud and blossom, whence the busy bee
Lays up her stores with ceaseless industry.

The snowy shroud that, draped about the hills
And lying level o'er th' expansive plain,
Has hushed the slender music of the rills,
Seems a just type of virtue with no stain
To blot its fair escutcheon and to be
An emblem of unspoiled simplicity.

O! I have wandered down this pathway when
Autumn had all her gorgeous glories on,
And the soft murmur of the breezes then
Seemed like a dying mother's benison,
So sad so full of love it came to me
Like blessings murmured back from death's cold sea.

And when the mild air turned the mosses green
That grow along the silvery runnel's side

And timid quails were whistling loud and keen,
And over ravine deep and meadow wide,
The swallow sported on her airy wing,
I tarried here to watch the opening spring

All seasons move in beauty, all are rife
With lessons of that never-wearying love
That covers earth with all her swarming life
And still upholds the planets as they move,
And winter does as precious blessings bring
As summer, autumn, or the flowery spring.

This walk in winter is as dear to me
As though the heavens had on their summer blue,
This snowy shroud that rests so silently
O'er hill and vale hail and love in lieu
Of th' soft grass and in the naked bowers
The frost-gems shine in place of leaves and flowers.

I sometimes dream of sunny southern lands,
Italian skies, and broad Arcadian vales,
Where sands of gold illumine the shining strands,
And where the lazy seas are white with sails,
Where ardent summer reigns imperial queen
And clothes the world in robes of fadeless green.

But fancy tires and to its home returns,
Sick with the squalor of the tropic lands,
And where the flame of love or memory burns,
Beholds the vales of green, the jewelled sands,
And all the wealth of Southern climes combined
In the fair gardens of immortal mind.

No longer then I pine for sunny shores,
That sleep along the central seas of earth,
For in this northern clime are greater stores,
And beauties of more beatific birth,—
The wealth of thought that weaker, fainter grows
Where life her most voluptuous mantle throws.

And thou, my own dear land, I bring to thee
An humble offering, in my walk to-day,
The glories of all storied climes I see,
And half-forgetful of the icy sway
That rules thy hills and lords it o'er thy plains,
I dream that here eternal summer reigns.

And it may reign within each kindly heart;
If hope and patience are abiding there,
And love and faith and mercy fill their part,
'Twill be the home of Summer, sweet and fair
As it is known in those serenest isles
That bask in nature's most refulgent smiles.

1852.

A N A B E L.

Comes my heart with grief o'erladen,
Bringing offerings to thee;
O! thou bright angelic maiden,
Who in far-off spirit aiden,
Sin and strife and sorrow free,
Dwelleth now in joy forever
Where the power of death is o'er,

And no poisonous breath shall sever
Those who live and love forever,
On that undiscovered shore.

But grim sorrow sitteth, dwelling
In this weary heart for thee,
Whence affection came upwelling
All its truth forever telling,
Telling its sincerity,
Truth we felt in days of olden
When our sun was shining golden,
And we thought us truly blest,
In those happy days of olden,
Ere thy spirit neared its rest.

But I'm thinking of a meeting,
Yet another one with thee,
When the years have ceased their fleeting,
And I'm thinking of the greeting
That thou then wilt give to me.

1854.

F R E E D O M.

Freedom singeth in the fountains,
Shouteth on the lofty mountains
Whence the avalanches roll,
Where the songs of birds are ringing,
Where the summer flowers are swinging
At the balmy air's control,
Where is freedom ever singing
In inspirations to the soul.

Freedom liveth, ever liveth,
And the faithful strength it giveth,
Will not, cannot fail nor die,
Till this world's great moving lever,
That is raising man forever,
Nearer to the world on high,
Shall all grievous chains dis sever,
As the years go sweeping by.

Freedom is the child of heaven,
Mortals' priceless boon, God-given,
Deathless as the master soul;
All the ministers of evil,
King nor pope, nor priest nor devil,
Despots that a space control,
Holding high war's bloody revel,
As the ages onward roll,—

Cannot make one slave contented
With the galling chains presented
For the limbs that God made free,
Not a people love the master
Who has given them but disaster,
Chains and tears and slavery,
But the world shall move on faster,
Year by year, to liberty.

O! sing praise to God, the giver
Of this boon that lives forever,
Nature with thy perfect voice,
Sun that shineth in thy glory,
Shout aloud its wondrous story
Till the listening spheres rejoice,
Till the earth shall evermore be
Freedom's heritage and choice.

O! with marvelous sad yearning,
All the souls of men keep turning,
 Turning, yearning for the light,
When from anarchy's long madness,
Rise the nations up in gladness,
 To proclaim the people's right;
Then no more to bow in sadness
 To th' oppressor's iron might.

Not a slave makes vain resistance
To the curse that gives existence
 But a hell of sorrowing days,
Not a panting exile flieth
But his woe to heaven up-crieth,
 And through all its devious ways
Wounded slavery crieth, dieth,
 While the tyrants sing its praise.

Hearken thou, O! fellow mortal,
Sitting at the future's portal,
 To the voices as they flow,
How the starry beams that quiver,
And the swiftly flowing river
 Shout for freedom as they go,
Then arise! thank God the giver,
 And for Freedom strike the blow.

1856.

INDIAN GRAVES.

All along the winding river,
And adown the shady glen,
On the hill and in the valley,
Are the graves of dusky men.

We are garrulous intruders,
On the sacred burying grounds
Of the Manitou's red children,
And the builders of the mounds.

Here the powah and the sachem,
Here the warrior and the maid;
Sleeping in the dust we tread on,
In the forests we invade,

Rest as calmly and as sweetly
As the mummied kings of old,
Where Cyrenes' marble city
Guards their consecrated mold.

Through the woodland, through the meadow,
As in silence oft I walk,
Whispering on the passing breezes
Fancy hears the red man's talk.

Muttering low and very sweetly
Of the good Great Spirit's love,
That descends like dews of evening
On His children from above.

Still repeating from the prophets
And the sachems grey and old,
Stories of the southwest aiden,
Curtained all around with gold,

Where the good and great Sowanna
Calleth all his children home,
Through the hunting grounds eternal,
Free as summer winds to roam.

Singing wildest songs of wailing
For the dead upon their way
On the four days' journey homeward
To the realms of light and day,

Chanting soft and gentle measures,
Lays of hope and songs of love,
Now like shout of laughing waters,
Now like cooing of the dove.

Then anon his feet make echo
To the war song's fiendish howl,
And revenge upon his features
Sets the pandemonian scowl.

See! again the smoke is curling
From the friendly calumet,
And the club of war is buried,
And the star of slaughter set.

But, alas! imagination,
Ever weaving dream on dream,
Soon forgets the buried red men
For some more congenial theme.

But although their race is ended,
And forever over here,
Let their virtues be remembered,
While we fervently revere

All their ancient burial places,
Hill and valley, plain and glen,
Honor every sacred relic
Of that fading race of men.

Gitche Manitou has called them
From the chase and war path here,
To the mystic land of spirits
In some undiscovered sphere.

In a land of light and glory
That no sachem's eye hath seen,
Where the rivers flow forever,
And the woods are always green,

Where the winter sun, descending,
Burns the southwest sky to flame,
Shall the Indian race be gathered
In the great Sowanna's name.

1856.

EVER.

Ever strive and ever labor,
Fainting not at all!
Let endurance be thy watchword,
Though thy strength be small.

Small the strength to each that's given,
Yet sufficient still
To upbear the trusting spirit
Over every ill.

What though calumny traduce thee,
Scorn the idle jade;
Ever true to thy convictions,
Stand, nor be afraid.

Let the poor time-serving trembler
Vaunt his hollow creed,
He would, like the storied Levite,
Let the stranger bleed;

Or, with temporizing tactics,
Raise the Jewish cry
Of "Release to us Barabbas,
But let Jesus die."

Does thy heart beat high for freedom,
And for the opprest—
O! let not its warm pulsations
Slumber in thy breast.

Truth demands that thou shouldst utter
Every noble thought,
Though it hedge thy path with sorrow,
Bring thy name to naught.

There is nothing true and noble,
There is naught sublime,
But imparts a heavenly music
To the keys of time.

Through the ever-widening cycles
Of unending years,
Lives and grows the better influence
That was born in tears.

Hard it seems to work for others,
By the midnight oil,
And receive but jeers and curses
For your patient toil.

Hard to publish truths unwelcome
To the public mind,
And be left to feed in sorrow
On truth's bitter rind.

Did the old disciples falter,
When the offended kings
Cast them to the howling lions
In their steaming rings?

And shall he who dares to suffer
For the right to-day,
Not receive his mede of glory,
Just as well as they?

Truth has gospels unaccepted
Calvarys yet to climb,
Crosses to be borne whose shadows
Shall outmeasure time.

Strike for right with zeal, but never
Deal in random blows;
Being very sure 'tis evil
That thou dost oppose.

Then with arms like Scandinavian
Thor, or Tubal Cain,
Ply the hammer on old Error's
Rough, unyielding grain.

Or if but an humble singer,
Tune thy slender songs;
They are drops whose small erosions
Wear the flinty wrongs.

Battle on! and God's approval,
Nerving heart and will,
Shall upbear thy hero spirit,
Over every ill. 1857.

MEGGY MAY.

Playing on the parlor floor,
With her laughing eyes of blue,
And her dark locks curling o'er
Dimpled cheeks of rosy hue,
Is our little Meggy May,
Full of joy, with mischief rife,
Sporting through the sunny day,
Fearing nought of care and strife
Meggy May! Meggy May!
Drive dull frowning care away,
While we sing of Meggy May.

By our darling's side at rest,
Purrs the kitten loud and gay,
He that in the happy hours,
Is the partner of her play;
Now our mischief-loving Meg,
Grasps him rudely by the ear,
Till Sir Kitt begins to beg,
And I have to interfere.
Meggy May! Meggy May!
Let the sunlight shine to-day,
While we sing of Meggy May.

Now she rises from her place,
And comes skipping to my knee,
Gazes upward in my face,
Laughing in her childish glee,
Slily gives my nose a tweak,
Pleasure dancing in her eyes,
And before I've time to speak,

Out into the yard she hies.
Meggy May! Meggy May!
Let our hearts be light to day,
While we sing of Meggy May.

Now she's chasing the first bee
I have seen this sunny spring,
Merry, romping, wild and free,
She's a happy joyous thing.
And I own a brother's love
From my heart doth proudly swell,
As my eyes incessant rove
With that little blue-eyed belle.
Meggy May! Meggy May!
Lovelier far than nymph or fay,
Is our little Meggy May.

Could her life thus ever be,
Free from sorrow, pain, and sin,
What a blest eternity
She'd be always dwelling in;
From an Eden here below
To a fairer land on high
Would her happy spirit go,
When her mortal frame should die.
Meggy May! Meggy May!
Let love fill our hearts to-day,
While we sing of Meggy May.

1857.

THE CEMETERY.

Amid the quiet bower of trees,
The ancient grave yard lies,
A silent hamlet on the road
That leads to paradise.

Here many weary souls have left
Their robes of mouldering clay,
And clad in more ethereal garbs,
Have journeyed on their way.

The man of forty summers gave,
In anguish deep and dread,
His stalwart form to moulder in
This village of the dead.

The matron came in sorrow's train,
And left her body here,
And viewless past to meet the Lord,
In love's eternal sphere.

The grandsire and the grandame left
Their ashes side by side,
To follow youth and hope again,
Where streams of pleasure glide.

Here gathered youth and beauty oft,
And trusting hearts were riven,
And mourned for them as dead because
They had removed to heaven.

The little child with laughing eyes,
Here closed its morning dream,
To waken in the fuller life
Across the silent stream.

So shall we all go down to dust
And leave our toils and cares,
And if we live as well, our rest
Will be as sweet as theirs.

1858.

A SUMMER POEM.

The winter and the tardy spring are gone,
And summer follows in the steps of May,
And from the fervid heart of ardent June,
Creation's thankful voices rise to-day.

The warbling of the merry minstrel birds
And shout of brooks that wander to the sea
Are not so dear as thy remembered words,
Sweet maiden friend, that sang so well to me.

The echoes of that dear old song remain,
Like the soft music from an angel's lute,
To soothe and calm my over-labored brain,
When other sounds and voices all are mute.

If thou hast wandered mid the trees and flowers,
Where Nature's angel from her radiant wings
Has cast her plumage on the fields and bowers,
Varied as are the forms of lovely things,

Thy soul has drank, in unison with mine,
Th' inspiring nectars of the flowery June,
And heavenly spirits, with a power divine,
Have kept the strings of thy young life in tune.

How sweetly in this balmy summer time,
The stream of life flows ever on and on,
Like the soft murmur of the poet's rhyme,
Or echoes of an endless benison.

And if, amid the trees and flowers, to-day,
The friends I love were wandering by my side,
How sweetly would the moments pass away,
And gorgeous noon to hallowed evening glide.

And I would have the fair and lovely throng
To pause and rest by yonder brooklet's side,
Whilst thou shouldst sing again the mournful song
Of Robbin's Mary, that so early died.

But we, perchance, again may never meet,
Where summer beauties, floating wide unfurled,
Like banners, wrap the earth, yet very sweet
Our meetings are in fancy's summer world.

No change of seasons mars the loveliness
With which the world of mind is ever fraught,
And e'en the wildest whirlwinds of distress
But purify the atmosphere of thought.

There let us meet, sweet maiden friend, until,
Leaving behind these mouldering urns of clay,
Our spirits soar above each earthly ill,
And mind meets mind in everlasting day.

ISADORE.

Purest souls sometimes are given
Into forms of slightest mould,
Spirits that belong to heaven
As the lambkin to the fold,
That no earthly love can stay,
From their native shore away.

Spirits very meek and lowly,
Such as in the days to come,
Singing praises to the Holy
In some glad millennium;
Then shall tread the earth alone
Till a thousand years are gone.

Such a soul of rarest beauty
O! sweet Isadore was thine,
As along the path of duty
Trode thy presence half divine,
Till a shadow, dark and bold,
Smote thee, and thy heart grew cold.

And thou perished like the blossoms,
In the sad November rain,
And we carry in our bosoms
Evermore regret and pain,
Surging like the winds that rave,
Nightly o'er thy little grave.

THE SPELLING SCHOOL.

Level silence on the landscapes,
Silence shrouding all the hills,
Lies the white robe of the winter,
Hushing all the laughing rills.

But a voice of song and laughter
Cheerier far, than brooklets make,
Echoes down the beaten high-way,
Scares the wild hare to the brake.

And the merry sleigh bells tinkle,
Chiming to a wordless rhyme,
While the voices of the sleighers
With the melody keep time.

It is by the country school house,
At the crossing of the roads,
That the drivers stop their horses,
And discharge their precious loads.

All the bells have ceased their music,
And the sleighs have ceased to run,
But within the district school house,
All is jollity and fun.

Hark! the warning word is given,
"Silence all!" the teacher cries,
And the champions take their stations,
Followed by a hundred eyes.

One, a rosy little maiden
Just arrived at "sweet sixteen,"
'Tother, lad of eighteen winters
Overgrown, and shy and green.

See! the saucy little lassie,
Throws the ferule in the air,
Whispering to her stout opposer,
"Catch it, Jemmy, if you dare."

Jemmy hears the words and blushes,
Blushes till his eyelids close,
Makes a pass to catch the ferule
Misses it and hits her nose.

Just as quick as thought can travel,
Runs a titter round the room,
And the choosers end their trial
With the handle of the broom.

"Choice is mine," cries Jem, elated,
Half forgetful of his shame,
Gazes round the room a moment,
Calls aloud the favored name.

Then the merry maiden chooses,
And thus round and round they go,
Till the spellers all are chosen,
Counting fifty in a row.

Now the war of words commences,
And the lettered soldiers stand
Forth to fight like ancient warriors,
One for each opposing band.

Lassie, in her seventh winter,
Eyes of blue and hair of brown,
Stands opposed to man with whiskers,
Bravely meets and spells him down.

Tiny boy, with lisping utterance,
Eight years old a week ago,
Reigns triumphant, till he conquers
Half the long opposing row.

Lad with sandy hair defeats him,
Stands and spells and spells away,
Ah! the little maid is vanquished.
Awkward Jemmy's gained the day.

Little hands are clapped together,
Feet are stamped upon the floor,
Till the master orders silence
And the fight begins once more.

Cupid, roguish little fellow,
Now is busy round the room,
Whispering gently to the maiden,
Words that set her cheek abloom.

While he puts the hearts a bobbing
Under half the showy vests,
That are buttoned round and over,
Boyish forms and manly breasts.

Words of love uncouth are spoken,
Yet with meaning pure and chaste,
And the brawny arms encircle,
Many a little tapered waist.

But in vain the watchful tutor,
Seeks to find the lovers out,
Arms withdraw and tongues are silent,
When the teacher comes about.

O! what happy dreams are woven,
For the future, fair and bright,
And what promises contracted
For the coming Sunday night.

Now the Spelling School is over,
And the sleighs are out of sight,
And the bells, the songs, the laughter,
Die away into the night.

I am left alone and dreaming,
Of the spelling schools of old,
And the maid whose smiles I valued
More than e'er my lips have told.

Here's to memory of the spellings
And their rounds of sinless joys,
For the merry homespun maidens
And the noble country boys.

1858.

WHITTIER.

Too long our goodly Saxon tongue
Had played the pimp to rank and power,
The praise of titled villains sung
Nor recked that every passing hour

Is laden with the woes and tears
That purchase all the pomp and state
Of tyrant kings and haughty peers,
Those sealers of the poor man's fate.

Too long the lash was unapplied
To priestly arrogance and sin,
While knaves adored and deified
Thronged every holy place within.

And Mammon with his shameless check
And iron front had lorded long,
And chained and scourged and sold the weak,
Nor felt the lash of virtuous song.

But lo! the world begins to hope,
The poor no longer friendless, weep;
The eyes of slumbering genius ope,
And sympathy awakes from sleep,

The voice of poetry is heard,
Its fiery bolts of scorn are hurled,
And despots into madness stirred
Run furious, maddening round the world.

“ The pomp of heraldry and power ”
No more protects the titled thief,
And love asserts her fruitful power
To bring the o’er-burdened slave relief.

The word is given, and the lyre
Receives it with a joyous thrill,
And, touched as by prophetic fire,
The poet soul asserts her will.

All shall be free: the nations move
To that sublimest era, when
The heavenly laws of peace and love
Shall be the laws that govern men,

All honor to the sons of song,
Whose fiery strains, or lays of love,
Have flamed about the tyrant throng
Or taught the slave to look above!

To Ayrshire’s plowman bard, who saw
The man uprising over caste;
To Whittier, preaching higher law,
That glorious lesson from the past;

That mighty past in which there stood
A man; a God, where, fresh and cool,
The breeze was in the mountain’s wood,
And taught mankind the Golden Rule.

Brave champion of the deathless right;
To thee, great Whittier, does belong
The honors of a moral knight,
Who wieldeth well his blades of song.

Who tempers every stroke with love,
With mercy sweetens every thrust,
Points every dying wretch above,
And lifts the trampled from the dust.

Such song as thine, so sweet so pure,
So warm with freedom's holy flame,
Must with the living things endure,
A spotless legacy to fame.

Beat on, great heart, and pour thy tide
Of song along this stricken land,
Till avarice, lust, and despot pride
No more on bleeding hearts shall stand.
1858.

THE SUGAR MAPLE.

The bright magnolia spreads its bloom
And loads the air with sweet perfume,
And gives a thousand charms unknown
To any but its native zone;
The olive and the fig tree stand
Along the slopes of that fair land,
Wherein, of old, the Jewish maids
Were wooed and won, their ample shades
Have fallen round kings and prophets old,
With silent blessings manifold.
But though we yield the blissful powers
Of olive shades, magnolia bowers,
And where the vine and fig tree grow,
See plenty smile on all below,

No better fairer trees are they,
When decked in summer's glad array,
And when the ripening autumn time
Bequeaths its wonders to the clime,
They ne'er present such canopy
Of waving leaves and brilliant dies,
In myriad optic harmonies,
To contrast with the sober skies,
As our own sugar maple tree.

What though for Afric's sons the palm
May yield its shade, the hermit's psalm,
Of old Armenian origin,
Be heard its sunny bowers within,
Or birds of strange and gorgeous plume,
Fresh from the tropic lands that bloom
With countless flowers of loveliest dies,
Pipe from its crest their harmonies,
Yet no superior shall it be
To our own sugar maple tree,
Whereon the blackbird tunes his lay,
The mocking bird and speckled jay,
Grow garrulously loud and gay.

The rugged pine, the mountain fir,
The cypress sad, and juniper,
The orange, with its fruit of gold,
And the Libanian cedars old;
The Banian tree whose living dome,
And shaft, and pillar, form the home
Wherein, reclined at lazy ease,
The Asian views his summer seas;
All these are lovely, all are fair,
But none the coronet may wear.

No stately monarch of the wood,
That lords it o'er the solitude;
No giant oak whose sinews form
The ship that rides the ocean storm,
No stately tulip waving high
His cups, against the summer sky,
Shall bear the crown or honored be
Beyond our sugar maple tree.

When first the sun begins to warm
The sleeping earth's long frozen form,
And bearing on his northern way,
To melt th' icicles by day,
Which winter, still with equal might,
Congeals and forms again at night;
O! who shall name in scornful mood;
That sweet, delicious, glorious flood,
That perfect sacharinean sea,
That floweth from the maple tree?
Not he, who nurtured in the west
Of memories that he deems the best,
Reveres the sweet unselfish joys
Of rustic girls and hardy boys,
Where fell in fleecy clouds, the damp
Evaporations from the camp,
And where the work was cheered along,
With mingled jollity and song,
And when the sugaring off was done,
Such sweets were known and heights of fun
As are but rightly understood,
By him, who, in some western wood,
Has scooped the primal sugar trough,
Presided at the stirring off,
Known every labor, every joy

That waited for the rustic boy,
Through all the year, till March should bring
The sugar-making and the spring.

Let not the puny despot boast
His vaunted sweets, that are the cost
Of labor, driven by the lash,
Red with the gore from many a gash,
Where human chattels toil in pain
To rear the sugar-yielding cane;
When by the cheerful work of hands
That never felt the hissing brands
That mark the currency of hell,
Where planters buy and traders sell;
Here, in this northern bower is wrought
A more luxurious sweet than aught,
The world had ever known until—
A good returns for many an ill—

The Indian skilled in savage ways
By rude example taught the free
Fore-fathers in the forest days,
While yet the May Flower sped the sea,
The merits of the maple tree.

To grace thy trunk as I have seen,
Glad children on the wooded green,
Around some fav'rite tree entwine
Flowers and grass, and bits of vine;
So with little skill I've wrought
This, my rhyming gift, and brought
It an offering unto thee,
Glorious Sugar Maple tree.

THE BUCKEYE TREE.

'Mid a lovely grove of maples
Stands a little buckeye tree,
Worthless, in the eyes of others,
Yet, 'tis very dear to me

Not because its graceful branches
Catch the verdure of the Spring,
Spreading out a leafy shelter
For the merry birds that sing.

Welcome to the early blossoms,
Long before the neighboring trees,
Casting off the spell of winter,
Hearken to the melodies

That are calling forth the beauty
And the glory of the year,
With delight obey the summons
And in shining robes appear.

Not because the wild flowers nestle
In the quiet of its shade,
But because two lovely children
Through the summer hours have played,

Underneath the swaying branches
Of the little buckeye tree,
That shall never more go thither
In their childish joy and glee.

There are bits of broken dishes
Scattered in their latest play,
There the rude seat that they fashioned,
Where the longest branches sway.

There, in song, their merry voices,
In the summer days were heard,
Mingling with the breeze's rustle
And the piping of the bird.

Happy were my little brother
And my sister, young and fair,
When beneath the buckeye's branches,
Love or sport was all their care.

Happy are my little brother
And my sister, young and fair,
While their spirit forms are growing
In a more celestial air:

While the buds that here were opening
Hasten to the perfect bloom,
In the land of life and glory
Lying just beyond the tomb.

Still the green leaves of the buckeye,
Through the quiet summer day,
Seem to whisper they are coming,
Only do their feet delay

'Mid the wild flowers and the roses;
They are culling them for me;
Culling them to twine a girdle
Round their fav'rite buckeye tree.

'Tis the breeze alone that whispers
'Mid the shining buckeye leaves,
And love, memory and sorrow
Into words the sighing weaves.

Worthless in the eyes of others,
Is that little buckeye tree;
But the memories that surround it
Make it very dear to me.

RAIN IN JUNE.

The rain is falling, falling,
With a constant pattering sound,
As though it were deftly calling
New life from the fruitful ground.

The rain is falling, falling,
Like tears from beauties eyes,
And dull gray clouds are walling,
The fields from sun and skies.

The clouds are flying, flying,
The Sun will soon be out,
And nature fresh from crying
Begin to laugh and shout.

For June is like a maiden
Of few and joyous years,
Whose face with dimples laden,
Laughs ever through her tears.

O! rain, what bounteous treasures
Thy cheerful drops shall yield,
To swell the goodly measures,
In barn and byre and field.

The shining woods shall rustle,
And all the growing grain
Rise up with shimmer and bustle,
To greet the pleasant rain.

THE BROOK.

Cheerful, sunny brooklet,
Laugh along thy way,
'Mid the wild sweet roses,
Neath the willow spray,
Singing to the lillies
Nodding on thy rim,
Little brook, I thank thee
For thy happy hymn.

Thus, upon life's journey
As I toil along,
May my griefs be lightened
By the gift of song,
And the soul-flowers blooming
By my onward way,
Yield their sweetest fragrance,
For each love-taught lay.

Merry little brooklet,
Flowing to the sea,
I, too, seek the ocean
Named eternity.
Sinless and rejoicing
Would that I, like thee,
Might go singing onward
To my parent sea.

FRAGMENTS.

There's a glory in the tree and blossom,
A trill in the wild bird's tone,
And balm in the Summery breezes,
That love revealeth, alone.

The poet's friends are leaves and flowers
That wither, fade and die,
The bow whose transient splendor comes,
To deck a stormy sky.

In vain he weaves his lays of love
Few echoes they awake,
They fall back on his heart like snow,
Distilling flake by flake.

The cold world views him with a frown,
And passes on its way;
But little children in the streets
Shall greet him at their play.

Better to rest beneath a cypress tree,
Than toil upon a sandy desert plain;
Better the flame be quenched with tears, than we
Should die of thirst where comes no genial rain;
Then cherish ye the tender buds of love
Until they spring into a matchless bloom,
'Tend ye its sparks until in flames above
They rise, dispelling shades of earthly gloom.

'Twas a glorious eve in Autumn,
All the sky was grand with clouds,
Here, like mounts of gold and amber,
Yonder rich vermillion curtains,
There like infant's snowy shrouds;
Like a dim lamp in a chamber
Of some mighty ancient palace,
Swung the red sun in the distance,
Low and lower down the west:
Twilight poured her mystic chalice,
Into all our longing spirits,
As he leaned his monarch forehead
On the night's ambrosial breast,
Closed the evening scene in splendor
And departed to his rest.

One soul mounts up on throbbing wings,
On throbbing wings of love and prayer,
O he cries "Our Father!" one but sings,
"Thou God, in love, art everywhere!"

And, round about them from on high,
Comes blessings like the murmurous tune
That underneath the ardent sky,
Pulsates through all the rapturous June.

I.

The birds of morning rise and shake
The music from their souls again,
I hear them in the tangled brake,
They warble down the shadowy glen;
And still to me
They seem to be
Forever fluting out the call
"Come up! come up!
The royal feast
Is spread for man and bird and beast,
With peace on earth good will to all."

II.

The larks fly to th' advancing sun,
The robins twitter on the tree,
And all the small birds raise, as one,
Their piping trebles of harmony.
And when the noisy day is done,
The whippowill's sadder melody,
From willow thickets, far or near,
Resounds through garden, grove and hall;
And still to me
They seem to be
Forever fluting out the call
"Come up! come up!
The royal feast
Is spread for man and bird and beast,
With peace on earth good will to all."

CHRISTMAS IDYLS.



CHRISTMAS IDYLS.

I.—THE BELLS.

I hear the ringing of the bells, the bells,
Announcing Christ has come;
I hear the cannon in the street,
And the rolling of the drum,
And the martial tread of a thousand feet,
And I ask if Christ has come.

I hear the ringing of the bells, the bells,
Proclaiming Christ is here;
And I see the children of want and sin,
Hovering far or near,
In the country's quiet. the city's din,
And I wonder if Christ is here.

I hear the ringing of the bells, the bells,
Echoing Christ is king;
And I see in a score of Christian lands
Oppression's brooding wing,
And murderous hearts, and bloody hands,
And I wonder if Christ is king.

I hear the ringing of the bells, the bells,
Resounding Christ is known;
And I see the treachery, know the hate,
And the bitter passions, grown
Alike in the hearts of humble or great,
And I wonder if Christ is known.

I hear the ringing of the bells, the bells,
Proclaiming Christ is here;
And I hear my baby's prattling glee,
And I bid adieu to fear,
For wherever a sinless child may be
The sweet Christ dwelleth near.

II.—THE WIDOW'S STORY.

You remember that poor old lady with the sad and
wrinkled face,
Who a year ago, come Christmas, sat in this very place.
And you remember that good old man we buried a week
ago,
Who seemed to live and labor the will of the Lord to
know,
And whenever he saw before him the work for him to do
He strove with his best endeavor to be to the labor true,
The folks with the high flung notions, despised his simple
ways,
And the aristocratic churchmen could never speak his
praise,
For he called them saintly Levites, who, in hours of
bitterest need
Would turn away from the sinner, or let the stranger
bleed,

Well it chanced one Christmas morning, a year or two ago,

This widow lady told him the following tale of woe:

“They tell me a christian woman, like I profess to be,
Must drown the voice of her sorrow and make her heart
be still,

And if her children will leave the Lord for naughty
ways, then she

Must cut them off forever, as heirs to endless ill,

And the elder came and scolded me because, as you
must know,

I went to see my daughter Jane, in a den of vice and woe,
And said it was unseemly in a christian woman like me,
To enter in at the threshold of a den of infamy,
That natural love should all give way before the love of
the Lord,

And if our children are vile and mean that they are
more abhorred

By the dear God above us, and by us should also be,

Than heathen in their filth and crime, in lands beyond
the sea;

And then he talked of Jane, and said that I had trained
her well,

But often the good Lord tries our faith with the very
imps from hell,

Put into the forms of our children; and if we love them
still,

As they go in sinful ways, it shows that our carnal will
Is not subdued as it should be, and brought in sweet
accord

With the will of the church that worketh the perfect
will of the Lord,

And so I sat and listened, till my heart was like to burst,
And my soul within me was yearning with a fiery burn-
ing thirst

That would not be abated nor satisfied at all,
Till I held Jane up in the arms of prayer once more, to
the Lord of all;
And when I had finished praying, I cannot tell you why,
It seemed like a peace was round me, from the very
courts on high;
And then I sat and wondered what James would say
and do,
If he could come back in health again, as he left me, in
sixty-two,
For you know he fell at Richmond, a fortnight after he
left,
There, on the cupboard, you see his cap, that a rebel sa-
ber cleft,—
What would he say, should I tell him that Henry and Jo
were dead?
(Henry died in the Libby, and Josy was shot through
the head
When our boys met Hood at Franklin,—you well remem-
ber the time;)
And how Jane, our only daughter, was led to a life of
crime,
By a high born wretch, who won her, destroyed her, and
went his way
To meet the smiles of the ladies and bask in the cheer-
ful day
Of many a social circle of wealth and high degree,
That would close its doors in horror against my girl
and me;
What would he say, should I tell him how the elders, wise
and nice,
Bade me drive Jane from under my roof, for I must not
sanction vice,
Nor evil in any shape at all, if I would a christian be;

And so my injured and weeping girl was driven away
from me;

Away from me, dear Lord, away, where could the poor
girl go,

To find a heart in sympathy with all her wrongs and
woe?

Would the pious take her in? Ah no! for even her slight-
est touch

Would soil the holy garments of the righteous over much.

Society, so nice without, so rotten and base within,

Held up its hands in horror at such a child of sin;

And the only place in all the world that was open to her
you see,

With a welcome that did not question, was a den of
infamy,

Where fallen women gather to ply their evil trade,

And receive the smiles of lofty men, where none do
make afraid,

Who would not dare with open hand in the light of open
day,

To meet their soiling touch or point their lives to a bet-
ter way,

Well, thus I questioned myself alone, for an hour or so
and then

I remembered that James, although, he was always the
best of men,

And I had often persuaded him to join the church and
stand,

A candidate elected for a home in Canaan's land,

Would ever turn away, and smile, and say with a friendly
sigh,

'My dear, you'll find that the better road lies another way,
by and by,

For they theorize and maunder, to make their own hea-
ven sure,

But they'd shut the doors of paradise in the face of the
struggling poor,
And the weary, heavy laden with burdens of care and
sin,
Can find in their priestly language no call to enter in,
The touch of their jeweled fingers and sweep of their
silken skirts,
Are not to be soiled by mechanics, nor the women who
make their shirts;
They talk of the Lord in the manger, and preach of
him on the cross,
But they melt down that calf of Aaron's, and quarrel
over the dross;
And that woman of Samaria would arouse their saintly
spleen,
And they'd turn up their perfect noses at Mary Magda-
lene,' "—
"Now hold!" responded the good man, "remember 'tis
Christmas day,
And we should lay all our bitter thoughts and memories
away.
The saints, you tell of, widow, are the leaders, who
blindly guess
That the Church of Christ is builded to the model of
selfishness,
Your James was right I grant it, and yet he was wrong
I see,
That he aimed a blow at the Christian, which should
fall on bigotry;
Go seek your sorrowing daughter, and make her pure
again,
And heaven will guard you safely from the puny wrath
of men."

III.—THE POET.

The poet rose and passed beneath the eaves
Whence hung a thousand icy lances down
To glow and glitter in the morning beams;
And when he saw the sun of Christmas rise,
Wandered a-singing thro' the little town;
And all the good folks wondered at his songs,
And said, "Alas! his mind is lost, is lost;
Poor crazy wight, he'll perish in the cold."
The rabble followed jeering as they went,
And pelting him with balls of gathered snow,
But still he smiled and shook his raven curls,
And sang the good old songs of merry yule,
Sang of the infant Christ in manger laid,
And of the star that glorified the East
Upon the morn of his nativity,
Sang of the good St. Nicholas and his gifts
To all the happy children in the world.
But still they jeered and pelted, so he turned
Full face upon the idle vagabonds,
And cried aloud in most discordant tones,
"Now here's for vice and sin and ignorance,
And boorish actions and brutality!
A song that I shall sing for you and yours,
For I perceive your drift and wish your praise
And your good will;" and so the song began,
The song that echoed to the very life
The inspirations of the vulgar crowd.
They paused a moment, heard their meanness take
The form of words, and knew their very thoughts
In the harsh music; so they turned and fled,
Fled from themselves, and all the good folks cried,
"The poet is most wise; a throne! a throne!"

Build him a throne and let him sing for us
 Through all the coming days," but he passed on
 And every Christmas time they think of him,
 And drink his health at many a steaming board.

IV.—FROST ON THE PANE

Not Raphael nor Titian
 Nor any grand master,
 Whose ideal vision
 Was rarer and vaster
 Than all of the Kaisers
 And monarchs and warriors,
 Those heapers of treasures
 Those gilded destroyers,
 Those lords of the world,
 In the chivalric ages.
 Whose deeds are impearled
 On historical pages;
 Not Rubens, the sainted,
 Nor Reynolds, the glorious,
 Ever pictured or painted
 Such wreathings victorious,
 As the frost spirit passing
 Has left on my window
 In beauty surpassing
 All labors that men do
 And so I am crying
 There's a glory in sorrow,
 To banish our sighing,
 And whisper, "To-morrow
 The skies shall be brighter
 The earth be more fair
 And our hearts shall be lighter
 To battle with care."

V.—THE FACE AT THE WINDOW.

A shrunken form, a motley face,
 Pressed close against the frosty pane,
 And wistful eyes that peer in vain
Into the warm and smiling place;

The warm and smiling place within,
 Where happy faces glow and greet;
 But she, worn bedouin of the street,
Can never come, poor child of sin.

Poor child of sin, the night and storm
 Shall wrap her in their cold embrace,
 And icy lips shall kiss her face,
But we are safe, and we are warm.

Build high the yule fire, fill the bowl,
 And sing the Christ has come again,
 We celebrate his reign with men,
His saving presence in the soul.

Now spread the costly presents round
 For those we love; who loves the bad?
 Let all our hearts be free and glad,
And flutter to the music's sound.

But who shall see, or who shall know,
 The sorrowing man with cross and crown,
 Go wandering through the giddy town,
With that poor child of sin and woe?

Perhaps in some Bachante's den
She meets the kindness we withhold,
A shelter from the biting cold,
With fallen women, ungodly men.

Perhaps—but why inquire her fate,
Who cares for her or where she rests,
Or what vague anguish tears her breast,
And taunts her with her vile estate?

Hail, happy Christmas! hail again!
The larger Christian faith that tends
To shape all things for happier ends,
Most serving God by serving men.

For who so sinful that his sin
Proclaims us wardens of his fate,
Or bids us shut the shining gate
And cry, he shall not enter in?

O! most humane when most divine,
And most divine when most humane,
The old is still renewed; the pain,
The anguish and the cross are thine!

Who sleek in satins, white in pearls,
Or rich with stocks and farms and goods,
Seeks out the starving multitudes,
Or whispers hope to fallen girls?

O! still as in the elder times,
Who follows Thee shall know the cross,
And count all hate and pride as loss,
And vengeful thoughts as bitter crimes.

Build high the yule fire, why complain,
Of sorrow in the happy earth,
Give this sweet hour to sinless mirth;
But Oh! the face against the pane;

Its sad appeal, its mute appeal,
The wistful gaze, as though she caught,
With her weak powers, at better thought,
And fain would rise to heavenly weal,

O! longing eyes and haggard face,
O! rags that wrap the unwashed form,—
A slim protection from the storm,—
Begone! nor haunt this cheerful place.

Now, at the Christmas would we raise
Full high our virtue, we would frown
All sinful passions coldly down
And give to Christ the purest praise.

But somehow yet the crown of thorns,
The saddened features we behold,
Beyond the window in the cold;
And while we sing "A million morns

Shall glow to noon, then fade to night,
While the Redeemer's glory burns,
And every heathen nation turns
To join the cross in glad delight;"

The sad eyes weeping, turn away,
And through the music sounds a voice,
"Beat on, glad hearts! while you rejoice,
And night flies swiftly from the day,"

"I go to seek the wandering sheep
That tremble, just without your door,
And bear my Christmas to the poor,
My comfort to the souls that weep."

And so they pass into the night
But love has higher meaning caught,
And we are given to nobler thought,
And hence shall walk in clearer light.

Now we are happy, we are warm,
But could we have it back again,
That guilty face against the pane,
It should be sheltered from the storm.

So hail! sweet Christmas, hail! again
The larger, better faith that tends
To shape all things for happier ends,
Most serving God, by serving men.



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NOTE BY THE PRINTER, WITH ERRATA.

The author of these poems residing several miles away from our office, and being of necessity very closely engaged in a most arduous business, it has been impossible for him to oversee the printing as closely as would have been best, both for himself and us, hence a few errors both in matter and punctuation have crept into this first small edition which will be corrected in the next. The critical reader will readily detect them and refer them to their proper source. A few of the most glaring of these errors are, however, noticed below.

Page 21, 2nd line, 5th stanza, for *him* read *one*.

Page 34, 5th line from bottom, for *Sunless* read *Sinless*.

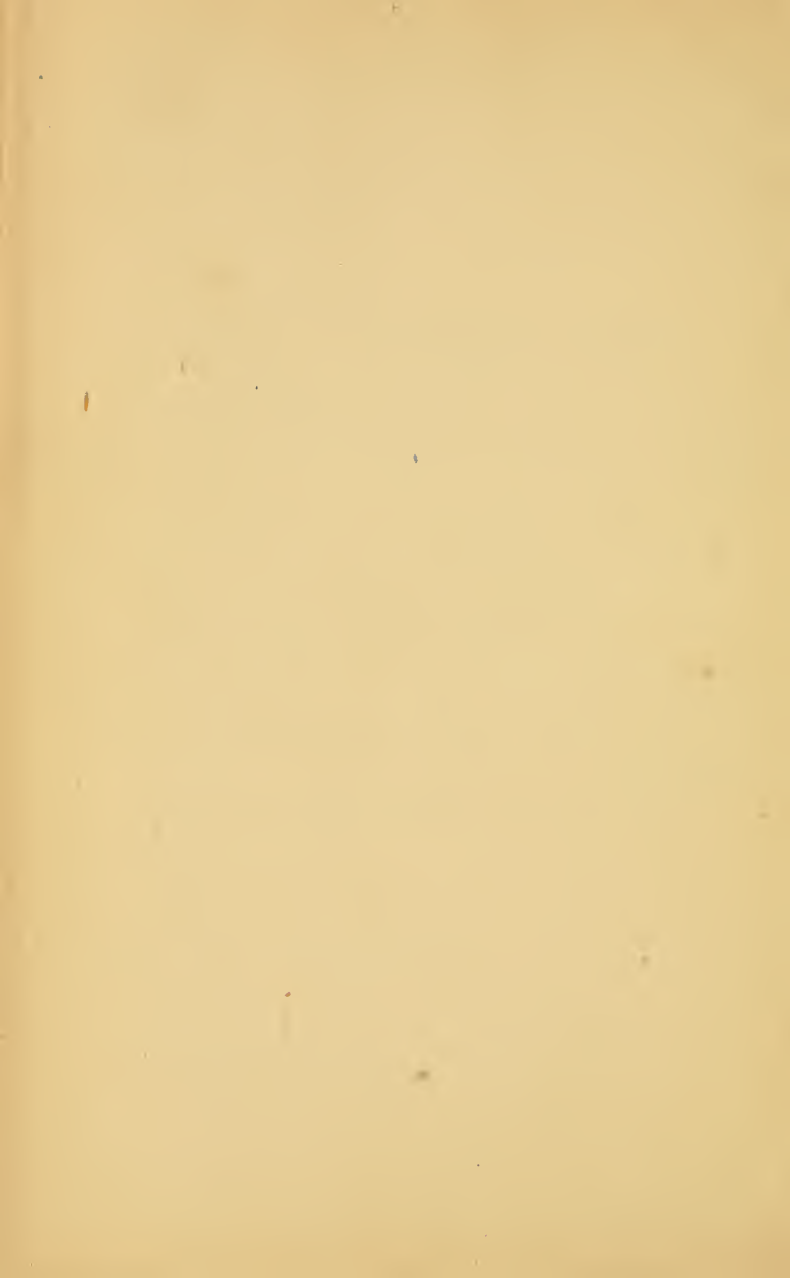
Page 42, 1st line of 4th stanza, for *Again* read *A gain*.

Page 47, last line of 4th stanza, for *till its avenues are filled*, read *till all its avenues are filled*.

Page 54, 7th line, third division, for *golds* read *gold*; last line of same, for *past* read *poet*.

Page 55, 4th line, insert *too* before *with*.

Page 71, 4th line of 4th stanza, for *worm* read *worn*.



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